VALLEY VOICE

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New Allegations Made Against Sheriff's Department

STEVE PASTIS

This month, letters were sent to Acting Tulare County Sheriff Mike Boudreaux, the California Department of Justice and Fair Practices Commission, Tulare County Counsel Kathleen Bales-Lange, the Tulare County Board of Supervisors and County Administrative Officer Jean Rousseau, Tulare County Human Resources Department Director Rhonda Sjostrom, Tulare County District Attorney Tim Ward, and the Tulare County Civil Grand Jury.

According to the letters, the Law Offices of Melo and Sarsfield represent "a peace officer currently employed by the Tulare County Sheriff's Department" with a complaint about senior law enforcement members in the department who "have been and continue to participate in an illegal lottery" – a subject covered in our March 6 issue.

The letters, however, also raised a new allegation, claiming an unnamed peace officer "is tired of the blatant violation of Tulare County policies prohibiting political activity while on duty."

"Our client is very, very concerned to the point (he or she is) looking around to see if people are following at certain locations," said attorney Marguerite Melo.

Since the decision was made to not disclose the identity of the client making the allegations, this article will refer to the client as "Deputy Pat." Pat has been with the Tulare County Sheriff's Department for about ten years.

"There's a lot of rules being broken," Deputy Pat told the Voice, alleging raffle ticket sales were conducted in the sheriff's office. "I was approached about a raffle. The ticket sales were for guns for the benefit of the election of Sheriff Boudreaux. I've seen it twice at my workplace."

Deputy Pat said no to buying a ticket. "I knew I was not supposed to do it. I said no and I didn't get asked again." The deputy claims to have faced "retaliation problems" as a result of not participating. "Because my support is not what it should be, there's now an investigation into something I didn't do. I'm innocent of everything." Pat wouldn't elaborate other than to say, "it was not work-related."

Deputy Pat was asked what outcome was sought by filing the complaint.

"My personal opinion is Sheriff Boudreaux is doing illegal stuff," Pat responded. "I want him to be removed from the election because he violated federal, state and local laws. I'm not looking for money. I'm looking for the right thing to be done. If he was not in the race, the problems would all go away."

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A feral cat on a Visalia property.

Visalia Group Conducts Second Successful TNR

CATHERINE DOE

Two weeks ago, the Visalia Feral Cat Coalition (VFCC) conducted its second successful sweep, trapping and neutering ten cats. The property owner, Mindy (whose surname we will not disclose to prevent others from abandoning cats at her property) was especially happy because she had been attempting to trap and neuter on her own.

"When you trap just a few cats at a time, you don't even put a dent in the colony," she said. She usually traps mainly males. Out of the ten cats that the VFCC recently trapped, six were females. Five of those were pregnant. When female cats are fixed the entire uterus is removed; the recent successful TNR, therefore, resulted, in 25 kittens being aborted.

The feral cat colony had established itself in a residential area, and all of Mindy's neighbors were very supportive of her efforts to get the cats fixed. "Only one person was a problem, but after last night he is on board." Mindy said. "He saw what was going on and all the people who showed up to help and was very happy with the result." When Mindy first started trapping the cats, he wanted her to just get rid of them, but now he understands what the VFCC is doing.

"The ultimate goal is to have happy healthy kitties," said Mindy. "The cats don't want to bother anyone. They just want a peaceful place to sleep. Now everyone can live in harmony with the kitties."

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Visalia City Council debates a drought action.

City Finally Takes Action on Drought

CATHERINE DOE

On Monday night, the Visalia City Council voted three-to-two in order to enforce Stage Four of the Water Conservation Ordinance. Mayor Steve Nelsen voted no out of frustration that the city council was now into its eighth week of talking about the drought without taking any action.

"The citizens of Visalia understand the severity of the drought and they want to act, and they want us to act," he said.

Warren Gubler voted no after trying to negotiate more watering days from Greg Collins in exchange for having the ordinance be effective immediately. Collins said he wasn't overly concerned about March and voted yes for the ordinance even though it would take 30 days to go into effect. For the ordinance to go into effect immediately, four out of the five council members would have had to have voted yes.

The city council approved the final version of the Stage Four Water Emergency Ordinance with only two modifications. Amy Shuklian proposed to eliminate watering days in January and February and give those days to May and October, when it's dryer. Bob Link was also trying to negotiate for more watering days throughout the year but for the sake of compromise, voted to pass the ordinance with Shuklian's motion.

The second modification involves how long residents can water on their allowed days to irrigate. Residents are allowed to water for 30 minutes without having to concern themselves with 15 minute cycles. Link and Gubler were negotiating for 45 minutes a day, but the other three felt strongly about limiting the watering to 30 minutes.

A Cal Water study on the ordinance passed two weeks ago by the council said that if Stage Four were to go into effect, it would result in a 30% savings in water use. Several of the city council members were highly motivated to make sure that none of the changes they made Monday night altered this.

Before the council debated the details of the water ordinance, Nelsen asked Mark Larson, general

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Visalia to Host Libertarian Party State Convention March 28-30

STAFF REPORTS

The City of Visalia will be the site of this year's California State Libertarian Convention. The event will take place March 28-30 at the Holiday Inn Hotel and Conference Center, 9000 W. Airport Ave. Activities will include speakers and panels as well as party business. The public is invited.

Bill Schuffenhauer will be a keynote speaker.

The Libertarian Party is the third-largest and fastest-growing political party in the nation. It proposes a move toward smaller government, coupled with stronger protection of civil liberties. Nationwide, there are 144 elected Libertarian officials and its 2012 presidential candidate, Gary Johnson, surpassed previous party voting records.

Visalia was chosen for the Libertarian Party Convention for its Central California location and easy transportation access. In addition, the party has seen some budding interest in Tulare County and plans to focus registration drives in the area. Holiday Inn Visalia hosted a previous Libertarian convention in 2009, and it is expected that this year's will be a success as well.

The California College Libertarians, who are holding their first convention in tandem with the state party, will host a reception on Friday evening with speaker Rob Van Tuinen, an army veteran and student at Modesto Junior College, who will share his recent experience with limited free speech zones in schools.

On Saturday, there will be a panel on California's water policies with three Libertarian water district members from different parts of the state who will come together to discuss a Libertarian

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FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

The Long, Upstream Swim of the Salmon

Pleased as I've been recently by all the attention afforded the Boudreaux gun raffle flap, still, I'm galled that everyone has missed the point. Poor Boudreaux has taken it in the shorts of late, and the overwhelming sentiment in print has been that the raffle itself was a shady operation. Maybe--but let's give him a break. That the raffle may have been illegal is, to my mind, a technicality. People, handguns were awarded as prizes in a campaign fundraiser put on by the man acting as our sheriff--an office which should regard the prevention of violence as a priority at least equal to enforcing the law. I will say it a last time: Peace officers have no business seeing to it that their interpretation of our Second Amendment right is protected--we can tackle that ourselves, thanks very much. And by placing more firearms in the hands of the public, our acting sheriff has adversely impacted public safety. Just you wait and see.

I wasn't going to write about this again. I told myself I'd exhausted the topic in my previous column and, even though my mind has been blank and it would be the easiest thing to do so, I've refused to revisit it. Yet the idea of the missed point has proved unshakeable, and until yesterday I was unsure where it was taking me.

Yesterday, some benighted soul posted the following on the Valley Voice's online arm: "This website is gay." This was pejorative, of course, jejune--and perhaps the most show-stopping Philippic the author was capable of delivering. This type of remark smacks of someone either very young or very stupid. Well, stupid is always sad--but if such a comment is reflective of Tulare County youngsters, then it is doubly so. Recent demographics suggest that societal toleration increases proportionally with youth; that is to say--the younger the generation, the more tolerant it is. At least until you come to the Millennials. What my generation is tolerant of, for instance, the Millennials don't even recognize as an issue. Ah, progress! Have we not advanced here as well?

But now I'm missing the point.

It occurred to me the other day, on my run, that I'm not really for gay rights. Nor am I for gay marriage. I'm not for women's rights, if I'm honest, or the rights of minorities. I'm not for animal rights or human rights--or the religious and political rights.

I am for equal rights, period.

Now, I understand that--as society evolves--we address these things consecutively. From the freedom of religion, replete with a separation of church and state, we have fought through: slavery; women's suffrage; civil rights; the ERA--and now we're embroiled in a battle over same-sex marriage. I realize there are many fights I have omitted, even forgotten--and I apologize for that. My wife says this must be the last frontier. I disagree. We'll always be in some kind of swordfight--it's in the nature of the American Experiment--but I'd like to think we're experienced enough by now to have learned a few things.

Consider the phrase, "On the right side of History." Everyone understands, on a gut level, that this implies an evolution of acceptance--much in the fashion that the generations have become increasingly more tolerant. We all know in which direction History is moving.

But here's the thing: We should know now that, by focusing on each new issue as it arises, it instantly becomes the straggler to be savaged. This is how we get wedge issues. It is how the opponents of History hope, every time, to divide and conquer.

It's how we all miss the point in these fights.

We should be savvy enough, in the 21st century, to appreciate that there remains only one genuine fight: the advancement of History. Sure--it might seem like the long, upstream swim of the salmon, at times, but we're all of a species and we're all going to the same place together.

And we're going there, always, for the next generation.

We'd do best by ourselves, and see our better angels served, by remembering this. No battle is ever about what it seems to be on the surface. History may have temporary opponents, and these may be legion, if shifting--but each fight for the advancement of History is really a fight for the Future. This is why the Ends can never justify the Means. It's also how the battle against the short-handled hoe, say, was the same as that for integration. The demand for marriage equality is a demand for equality, period. And in a way, even though we'll keep having them, these contests connect us. After all, we can't have a Future if we don't have in common History.

— Joseph Oldenbourg

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Publisher/Editor: Joseph Oldenbourg
joseph@ourvalleyvoice.com

Associate Editor/Sales: Steve Pastis (steve@ourvalleyvoice.com)

Staff:
Catherine Doe, writer (catherine@ourvalleyvoice.com)
Tony Maldonado, webmaster (tony@ourvalleyvoice.com)
April Heath Pastis, writer (april@ourvalleyvoice.com)
Louie Luna, sales (louie@ourvalleyvoice.com)

Contact us & share your opinion
www.ourvalleyvoice.com
208 W. Main St., Ste. E • Visalia, CA 93291

NEXT DEADLINE:
THURSDAY, MARCH 27, 2014

POLITICAL FIX

CATHERINE DOE

MACARENO OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCES HIS CANDIDACY FOR STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT 26

Ruben Macareno, Tulare County Democratic Party Chairman, made it official March 16th by announcing his candidacy for the 26th State Assembly District. Speaking in front of a hometown crowd that had gathered at Farmersville's historic Methodist Church, Mr. Macareno outlined his priorities for the county.

"I am one hundred percent against fracking and will fight for clean drinking water for everyone." He also pointed out that neither Kings nor Tulare County has a state university and we need to start preparing today to convince the state to build one here. "I am a product of this community and I will be your mouthpiece so we bring about true change in Tulare County."

Mr. Macareno has been racking up some important endorsements since making the decision to run. Carlton Jones and Mr. Macareno both sought the California Democratic Party' endorsement. They faced off in Palmdale at the party's regional Pre-Conference Endorsement meeting. Mr. Macareno won with a 16-10 vote over Tulare Vice-Mayor Jones. The third candidate, Derek Thomas, did not seek the endorsement.

Of the 26 endorsement electors Mr. Macareno received all five votes from Mr. Jones's hometown of Tulare, all of Inyo County's three votes, all two from his childhood town of Farmersville, half of the 10 votes from Visalia where he currently resides and one from Porterville for a total of 16 votes. Mr. Jones received half of Visalia's votes, one from Ivanhoe, Lindsay, Exeter, Seville and Lake Isabella.

The California Democratic Party did not officially endorse either candidate because they were deadlocked among delegates. Since the convention Mr. Macareno has received endorsements from, among others, Greg Gomez, the vice mayor of Farmersville, the Porterville Democratic Club, and Lucia Vazquez, Visalia Unified District Trustee.

CENTRO MEXICANO AMERICAN LATINO ENDORSES FELIPE MARTINEZ FOR TULARE COUNTY SUPERVISOR DISTRICT 5

On March 9th, the Centro Mexicano American Latino (CMAL) held a forum for Tulare County Supervisor's District 5. The candidates who attended were Virginia Gurrola, Greg Shelton and Felipe Martinez. Supervisor Mike Ennis, the incumbent, did not respond to CMAL's several invitations.

Once Mr. Shelton arrived at the forum and realized that Mr. Ennis was not participating, he decided not to participate himself. Mr. Shelton said that his beef wasn't with Ms. Gurrola or Mr. Martinez, but that wanted to have it out with Mr. Ennis. Besides, now it was a "Latino thing." Juan Duran, organizer of the event, tried to convince Mr. Shelton to reconsider, saying that some attendees had come a long way just to hear his thoughts about running the district. But Mr. Shelton declined.

During the forum, both Ms. Gurrola and Mr. Martinez said that they respected the other supervisors and felt they could work well with all of them. One of the main concerns the audience had was having two Latinos run for the same office and how it would split the Hispanic vote. Mr. Martinez had discussed with Ms. Gurrola over a year and a half ago that he planned on running. She decided to join the race anyway. "That's what happens when you have two very qualified Hispanics finally step forward to run for office," said Mr. Duran.

After the executive board discussed the two candidates they decided to endorse Mr. Martinez for Tulare County Supervisor. The board felt that he was a good negotiator, could work well with people, was down to earth and committed to his constituents.

The CMAL will not be holding a forum for Tulare County Sheriff because they have already decided to endorse Dave Whaley.

The CMAL will also not be holding a forum for the Porterville City Council because Mr. Duran is himself a candidate.

STICK TO THE ISSUES

Amanda Renteria recently tweeted, "Thank you volunteers for helping spread our message across CA21." What message, exactly, would that be?

Since Ms. Renteria burst on the scene last fall announcing her run for the 21st congressional district, her would-be constituents are anxious to learn her position on the Valley's pressing issues. But perusing her website, Amanda Renteria for Congress, is an exercise in frustration. Where is the tab for "issues?"

I reached out to Ms. Renteria's campaign manager in an email and she said, "Right now, our campaign is focusing on our biography so that voters can get to know Amanda's story. We are also happy to set up interviews further in the future to focus on policy discussions and issues that are important to the Valley." I'm still waiting.

For those of us who didn't letter in two varsity sports at a very prestigious university, we would rather read about what she thinks of the water bond, High-Speed Rail or fracking - not just her personal history.

After no little amount of digging, I finally found one article in the *Bakersfield Californian* that kind of, sort of, explained Ms. Renteria positions. She and her two opponents, Rep David Valadao and John Hernandez, participated in a candidates' forum last month at a library in Bakersfield. During the forum, Rep. Valadao clearly stated he is for immigration reform and fracking, and against the Affordable Health Care Act and High-Speed Rail.

Ms. Renteria? "She supports the spirit of High-Speed rail but wants to see a functional financial plan that can make the vision a reality." She "thinks fracking needs strong regulation," and "knows the Affordable Care Act is flawed, but thinks it can and should be fixed," according to the *Bakersfield Californian*.

What?

I know some issues are too complicated for sound bites, but occationally you just want to hear a "yes" or a "no."

Ms. Renteria just won the California Democratic Party's endorsement over veteran politician John Hernandez, which is no small accomplishment. Republicans were also impressed, and threatened, from the beginning, taking the time to create a fake renteria4congress.com website to bash Ms. Renteria. But in the age of on-demand information, a constituent should be able to find her stand on the issues in five minutes. Mr. Hernandez is not going to pull off another political upset like he did against Blong Xion in 2012, but he has the website of a congress member. Ms. Renteria should also.

TWO MORE REPUBLICANS JOIN THE 26TH DISTRICT STATE ASSEMBLY RACE

Rudy Mendoza and Esther Barajas have two more Republicans to contend with on the ballot for Assembly District 26. Out of the seven candidates four are Republicans. The new contenders add to the already interesting complexity of this race.

Teresita "Tess" Andres was born and raised in Aguson, an island in the southern Philippines. She is a naturalized citizen and has lived in Visalia with her husband for twelve years. While in the Philippines she worked in the office of the Executive Secretary to President Fidel Ramos, who was in office from 1992-1998. During Ms. Andres world travels, she met many international dignitaries and has had the life experiences to "be an effective instrument in helping District 26."

According to her website, she will be the first COS student to have run for this office. "I enjoy being a lifelong learner, with various certifications, ranging from emergency medical technician to public notary. My experience as a student is instrumental in this race to Sacramento." She wants to serve in the state assembly because of her desire to give back to the community and share her experiences as a dedicated public servant.

The fourth Republican in the race is an Iraqi war veteran, Devon Mathis. Mr. Mathis is running for the state assembly because, "I didn't go to war to sit around and let other people decide on the future of the Valley or my kids."

He was born in Porterville but has settled with his fiancé and their children in Visalia. Mr. Mathis was a sergeant for 10 years in the Army and went on two combat tours in Iraq. During this time, he trained and mentored hundreds of successful soldiers. In his second tour, he was blown up in a road side bomb attack in 2008 in which he earned a Purple Heart. After returning home, and recovering from his extensive injuries, he graduated from Fresno State with a BA in Public Administration. He was also the President of the Veterans Fraternity.

There was almost a fifth Republican candidate that would have trumped all of the above. Former Assembly Member Bill Maze tried to pull papers to run for his old office. Mr. Maze held the seat from 2002 to 2008. When he termed out of office, his wife Rebecca ran for the seat, but lost in the Republican primary against Connie Conway. The law has since changed about term limits, which motivated him to try and run again. However, the law does not include anyone who was in office between 1990 and 2010. Too bad. It would have been interesting to see how the political dust settled in the fight for endorsements and campaign money between Rudy and Bill.

ASHLEY SWEARENGIN PUTS SEXY BACK INTO THE CONTROLLERS OFFICE

GOP Chairman Jim Brulte was quoted as saying that he "does not buy into the idea that Republicans can't win statewide. We've got some really great candidates running statewide."

Really? - No.

While one Republican candidate for governor relies on a borrowed RV and Facebook ads for his campaign, and the other voted for Barack Obama in 2008, saying the Republicans have a solid slate of candidates is a bit much. There does exist one ray of sunshine though for the Republican Party, and it comes straight from the Central Valley, Ashley Swearengin.

A few days before the filing deadline, Fresno Mayor Ashley Swearengin threw in her hat to run for State Controller. And that's when the criticism started flying, coming from none other than her own party.

It went like this:

Now Fresno will only have a part-time mayor while she campaigns. Her campaign will prove that Fresno doesn't need a strong mayor government. Her candidacy is just positioning her for the 2016 election. Her support for High-Speed Rail is unpopular. Working with Obama will lose her votes. If she wins, it will cost Fresno megabucks for a special election. She will leave a lot of unfinished business at city hall.

According to the *Fresno Bee*, "She is rocking the local political boat."

Good.

Her critics fail to see the big picture. Ms. Swearengin is telegenic and well spoken. She is going to make the two Democrats running for Controller spend their campaign money, on their own campaign, instead of handing it over to other Democrats in tight races. She will put Fresno on the political map and will draw local Republicans to the polls helping both Vidak and Valadao. Could you say the same for the Republicans'

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Q&A: INTERVIEWS WITH CANDIDATES FOR STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT 26

Esther Barajas

STAFF REPORTS

Born in Mexico City in 1979, Esther Barajas migrated to the United States in 1985 with her parents and two siblings. First arriving in San Diego, Esther and her family moved to Visalia in 2007, two years after she attained U.S. citizenship. A 1997 graduate of Mission Bay High School, she furthered her education by earning a degree in Interior Design from the Institute of Design and Merchandising. Esther founded the first Latino Rotary Chapter in Tulare County. Currently, she works as a licensed insurance broker.

WHY, CONCISELY, ARE YOU RUNNING?

I think that politics is a place that puts leaders, like myself, in which we can impact our district either negatively or positively and, of course, that's why it's important to choose the right candidate. But again, because I believe it's a place that allows leaders to improve the quality of the district.

WHAT POLICY ISSUES OR SOCIAL AND FISCAL ISSUES DO YOU HAVE IN COMMON WITH DEMOCRATS, BECAUSE THEY ARE SUCH AN OVERWHELMING MAJORITY IN THE STATE GOVERNMENT?

Creating jobs is a non-partisan issue. We want to see more jobs in California, more precisely in the Central Valley. Education I believe also is non-partisan. We definitely want to continue enhancing education and continue to make it accessible. That's definitely non-partisan. And I would add a third, which is part of my campaign, is assisting our veterans, improving their services and their programs. I believe whether you're a Democrat or Republican if you know someone who has served, if you're related to someone who has served, whether you do or not it should be everyone's desire or goal to ensure that our veterans are being assisted properly. I think that is a non-partisan issue, too.

Esther Barajas

WHO ARE YOU SUPPORTING FOR GOVERNOR?

I'm going to say Tim Donnelly. That's my guy. He has demonstrated himself to be a conservative when it comes to fiscal matters. And I would identify myself as a fiscal conservative. We stand on the same platform as far as gun rights and traditional marriage, etc. And I think when it comes to the matters that people are concerned about we are very much aligned.

COULD YOU ELABORATE A LITTLE MORE ON GUN ISSUES?

In a time in which we are seeing all this violence with guns and the schools, it's important to track down and to have a track system of who is obtaining guns. It's logical and it's only wise that we know who we are selling guns to, that we have registered gun owners. However, when it comes to gun rights, it is definitely a constitutional right. As citizens, we have the right to bear arms and use them if we feel endangered. I don't think we should have that right questioned, or in any way compromised.

THE ACA WILL NOT COVER UNDOCUMENTED PEOPLE. WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THAT?

I believe that any assistance programs that we create in our nation, in our country, should be designed for people that are legally in the nation.

WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS ON FRACKING?

I'll abstain for the moment. We don't yet have an established policy or statement we will make on that.

HOW ABOUT THE WATER BOND INITIATIVE?

I do believe that we need to focus on working with the federal government in releasing more water to our Central Valley. We're obviously facing a third year of drought in California. I am not for the Bay Delta proposed tunnels. I believe it's $26 billion that they would cost us, and we are not assured that we will be obtaining the water that we require. And it'll also damage the Delta permanently. So I'm for anything that is fiscally conservative that is a viable solution. I think we need to start seeing a method of desalinization.

WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS ON THE HIGH-SPEED RAIL?

I'm definitely not for it. It has pretty much surpassed the budget. I think the cons are more than the pros.

Ruben Macareno

Raised in Farmersville, Ruben Macareno earned an AA degree from Los Angeles City College after attending Exeter Union High School. He went on to California State University, Los Angeles, before working in the news media, fundraising and political spheres. The founder of Latino Democrats of Tulare County, Ruben, self-employed, is currently chairman of the Tulare County Democratic Party. He is married, and has two children.

WHAT ELECTED EXPERIENCE DO YOU HAVE THAT GIVES YOU CONFIDENCE IN SEEKING THIS OFFICE?

Basically, I'm the chairman of the Tulare County Democratic Party, so I see the process up front. And I have worked with people that are currently in the legislature right now. I've served with them on statewide boards prior to them being in the Assembly. So I do have communication with them. I've also worked with the Los Angeles Times as an administrator in the newsroom, so there's always a political interaction between the media and with the political arena. But most importantly, I think above all else, I think a good representative is someone that has a good connection with the community, has the pulse of the community, and I've been an activist for a very long time, since 2007. And to listen to the needs and concerns of the community I think is what gives me the confidence to say I can speak on their behalf. I feel like I'm part of the fabric of this community, and I feel that I'll be able to do a good job.

Ruben Macareno announces his candidacy.

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING – WHAT ARE YOUR AIMS?

First of all, I'm running because I didn't see anyone that was really someone that would represent the district in its entirety, when we've had our current legislator's focus has been on the farmers and keeping taxes down, and I think that's important. However, it's not all that makes this district. This district is composed of many other professionals, many hard-working people, and I just felt compelled to run when I didn't see a candidate that would perhaps fulfill those needs. But one of the things I felt was most important in the area is that we have what I would call a brain drain. We don't have a state university in the area, or any university, and I think we need to start having that communication once again. And one of my central points in the legislature would be to present a study of bringing a state-run university to Assembly District 26. There's various locations for that, but if we were to look at projections of the future, and population projections etc., there's going to be a need to build more universities. And I think this area needs to be in the forefront. I think it's important that we're part of that particular agenda.

HOW DO YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE RUNNING IN SUCH A HEAVILY REPUBLICAN DISTRICT?

I think it's important we look at the issues foremost, beyond the political lines. I think it's important that we

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Darcy R. Staberg
(559) 827-5757

Lisa Ritchie
(559) 679-6889

920 N. Demaree, Visalia • $585,000
This exquisite 5 bedroom 3 bath home is filled with light, space and volume, exemplifying a true golf course retreat. The large downstairs public rooms and kitchen feature spectacular views of the backyard and Visalia Country Club Golf Course. In addition to the attached oversized 2 car garage there is a motor court, rolling lawns, fresh landscaping and a fabulous large pool complete with a built-in spa. Agent is Darcy Staberg (559) 827-5757.

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State Water Resource Control Board Plans to Cut Back Delta Water for Ag

STAFF REPORTS

On March 14, Kings County Farm Bureau (KCFB) sent a letter to Tom Howard, executive director of the California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) demanding that he reconsider the board's proposal to seize century-long water rights from farmers.

"This decision will have grave consequences on Central Valley communities," reads the letter signed by KCFB President Dino Giacomazzi. "Farmers, farm laborers, rural municipalities and the many industries that depend on them require 100% of federal water deliveries for drinking water and irrigation.

"It is our understanding that the board plans to issue a decision to cut back all Delta water pumping for agriculture, in order to achieve carryover storage. The communities that depend on agriculture and federal water will be the hardest hit by this decision and will shoulder the burden of the entire state. The economic implications will be devastating, increasing unemployment rates from 35-70% in several disadvantaged communities, while hundreds of thousands of acres of farmland lay fallow.

"A cut in water will not only have a disastrous impact on disadvantaged communities, but also the state's economy. Many jobs depend on agricultural production including processing, transportation, wholesale, retail and shipping through ports, such as Los Angeles, Long Beach and Oakland. The value of lost economic activity tied to reduce crop production is estimated to reach $5 billion."

After members of U.S. Congress heard about SWRCB's proposal, they sent an urgent appeal to Howard and the board, copying Governor Jerry Brown, pleading for a two-week delay in the decision. The letter, signed by Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, and Reps. Jim Costa and John Garamendi, urged the board to defer the decision until at least March 21 to "make sure it is correctly calibrated to minimize the potentially devastating effects on many Californians."

At the end of January, the California Department of Water Resources announced it would halt water deliveries to Central Valley Project and State Water Project water users. Although such water users have the legal right to pump water, the state board prohibits users from doing so, also requiring users to set aside the water they would use to grow food in 2015. California's Constitution requires regulatory agencies to issue a notice and hold a public hearing before water use – which has already been authorized for an allowable use – can be restricted.

Farms are the only businesses targeted under this water rights attack. Historic unemployment in rural parts of the Central Valley is higher than 40% when water supplies are low.

Kings County Farm Bureau is a non-profit, advocacy organization that represents approximately 800 members of the agricultural community. The mission of KCFB is to provide education, promotion and representation of agriculture.

City of Visalia Moves Forward with Mandated District Elections

STAFF REPORTS

The Visalia City Council Monday night approved signing a contract with National Demographics Corporation (NDC) to prepare several boundary options for the coming district elections in 2016. The company would be using 2010 census data and draft three options from which the council and public can choose. The NDC will also provide "Public Participation Kits" with all the necessary instructions to give Visalians the tools to propose their own districts. The National Demographics Corporation will be conducting three to five sessions in Visalia that will include an initial information gathering session, a presentation of the draft plans, and at least one community forum. A draft of the district boundary maps should be ready for presentation by fall.

Last winter, the Tulare County court ordered the City of Visalia to conduct its city council elections by district. To comply with this court order, the city must adopt boundaries that divide Visalia into five districts. The districts must comply with state and federal election laws, and detailed demographic data is needed to develop appropriate district boundaries. The city does not have these skills in house, therefore, city staff recommended hiring an experienced demographer to perform the needed technical tasks to establish election districts.

Doug Johnson, principal with NDC, previously worked with the city in 2012 when the Blue Ribbon Task Force was discussing district elections. At the time, staff found his technical work to be very sound, and his presentations of technical information to be very professional and delivered in a manner that made it relatively easy to understand the data. In addition, NDC has a unique understanding of the Tulare County area because the firm worked with the Visalia Unified School District, and the Tulare District Hospital, when those agencies developed their district boundaries.

Council Member Amy Shuklian inquired about the time line. Leslie Caviglia, assistant city manager, said that the boundary maps could be done within eight to 12 weeks if it needed to be done quickly, but that the staff felt it was important for the community to have ample time to consider and discuss the boundary options. The council also needs to have adequate time to approve a final districting plan and educate the community on the final boundaries. Since the first actual election is not until 2016, the staff felt that if the council adopts the final boundaries by June, 2015, it will give the public a full year prior to the start of the 2016 city council election cycle to understand the districts.

The National Demographics Corporation will work with the Tulare County Elections Office to implement the final district election boundary lines approved by the city council. Up to $48,000 will be appropriated from the General Fund for this contract.

The final vote to approve the contract was three to two with Shuklian and Mayor Steve Nelsen voting no because they are against district elections.

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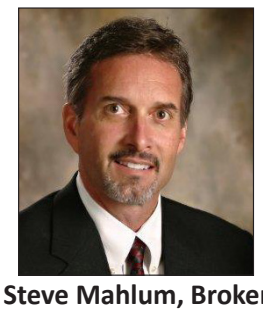
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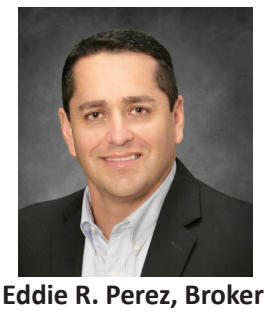
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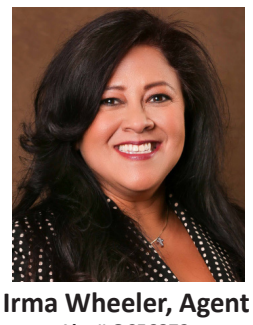
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Cats

Continued from p. 1

Mindy still has a few more cats to trap on her property and is thinking of doing a daytime sweep instead of at night. "We were trapping from 6:00pm to 10:30am because when you have a hot spot you want to keep an empty trap there," she said.

Dr. Nanette Kuswa, owner of Companion Animal Medical Center, said everything went very smoothly. "Everyone was much more comfortable with the system. Everyone knew what to do, and in addition to being fixed, all the animals got their treatments – vaccination, de-fleaed, and leukemia test."

Dr. Kuswa used the same team as she did during the first sweep in February and finished treating all ten cats within an hour. Now, she said, it's time to reassess and refine techniques.

As far as Mindy is concerned, the formation of the VFCC is the best thing to happen to Visalia in a long time and will really improve the city. "This is a great thing. The only thing coming out of this is good. If you can get everyone on board to do TNR it works."

Mindy also pointed out that Los Angeles has become a no-kill community and they are doing it through TNR. "Even Disneyland has embraced TNR to control their 250 feral cat colony. At first they were just killing them and the colony kept getting bigger," said Mindy. "People just don't understand the vacuum effect."

"Hopefully this will show the city and the county that this is the way to deal with feral cat colonies," said Dr. Kuswa.

The VFCC needs blankets, cat food, cat vaccinations and most of all traps. Cash donations are also always appreciated. If you need help with a feral cat colony or want to be a part of this effort, call 429-5415 or email visaliacoalition@gmail.com.

Sheriff

Continued from p. 1

Pat's attorneys offered a slightly different perspective.

"We've never accused Boudreaux of doing anything," said Melo. "Our concern is about the top management of the department."

Deputy Pat claimed to be "neutral" about whom to vote for before, but has since approached the Dave Whaley campaign to offer support. Neither Melo nor her partner, John Sarsfield, said which candidate they support for sheriff, but both of them said they signed Boudreaux's petition to be on the ballot.

Deputy Pat is not the only person coming forward with a complaint about the sheriff's department, according to Sarsfield. "We have multiple clients and each has a unique issue," he said, adding that four people have come forward so far.

"What they want to see is for the district attorney's office to do their job," said Melo.

"Our clients are very familiar with what the district attorney can and cannot do and they would normally investigate matters like this," Sarsfield said. "The only reason they're not is because they don't have the stomach for a high-profile case."

Are these clients looking for financial compensation?

"At this point, no," Melo replied. "At this time, they are enjoying the work they are doing. This is not just a job. This is a career for these officers.

"They want the behavior to stop immediately," she continued. "They want the retaliation to stop immediately. They are not interested in Boudreaux winning or losing. They have the right to be allowed to conduct their work in peace without political pressure."

On that, the clients, attorneys and Boudreaux apparently agree. "We want people to come to work and not have to worry about politics," said Boudreaux.

Information was sent to all department personnel about politics and the workplace, said Assistant Sheriff Greg Wright, who added that he followed up with two emails to all sheriff's department employees, reiterating the sheriff's policy to keep politics out of the office, and to report any violations.

The document, called "Restrictions on Political Activities of County Officers and Employees," was sent to everyone in the sheriff's department by the county human resources department last October. It was sent again on March 14 with the following message from Boudreaux:

"I am asking that each of you take a few moments and read the attached memo that was previously provided to all county employees. While any political race at the local, state or national level can at times evoke emotion and passion, it is our individual and agency responsibility to refrain from political activities while at work. Should you feel there is a violation of the policies listed within the attached document please contact your immediate supervisor."

The document, which lists state and federal laws dealing with politics and the workplace, as well as a Tulare County ordinance, starts with the following summary: "County officers and employees may express their political opinions and engage in political activities, but must live with some restrictions imposed by state and, sometimes, federal law. In general, this means that county officers and employees must ensure that when they engage in political activities, they do so only in their individual capacities, while not on duty, and avoid even the appearance that they are speaking or acting for the County of Tulare."

"We are really taking great strides in making sure that people understand that politics on duty is not allowed," Boudreaux said. "Any report we are given is passed along to HR and they take care of investigating it."

Two cases involving complaints about the political campaign went to Human Resources, according to Assistant Sheriff Robin Skiles.

"HR has taken a look at anything that comes through in that regard," said Boudreaux. "Those cases have been determined unfounded."

Sarsfield was looking into another issue, the accuracy of the claim on the gun raffle flier that stated the odds of winning. "They sold 2,600 tickets," he said, adding that the flier promised the odds were one in 500.

"There was a drawing for each gun," said Boudreaux, who noted that with the tickets drawn for each of the 11 guns, the odds of winning were half of what was advertised – one in 236.

When asked if tickets were sold during work hours, Boudreaux responded as if it were a trick question. "We work 24 hours a day, but that doesn't mean the tickets were sold during work time," he said. "I don't have any information that it took place on duty other than the opposition saying so."

He added later, "You have a lot of information coming from the opposition."

The arguments backing and disputing the allegations that the gun raffle was illegal were covered in the gun raffle article in our March 6 issue, but Sarsfield raised them during an interview to offer his unique perspective, as the writer of the state's statute while working in the office of State Senator Bruce McPherson, R-Santa Cruz.

"It was never intended for political purposes," he said, adding that the statute amends the state's gambling laws to allow nonprofit organizations, such as Boys & Girls Clubs, PTA's and churches to raise needed funds.

"It's really important that we understand that we contacted a variety of agencies that are confident we operated legally," Boudreaux said, before reiterating the message of his campaign.

"My position is that we've been productive, with new and innovative ideas that will take us to the future," he said. "Things are running very, very smoothly and we have a lot of good men and women. I'm proud of the fact we're running a campaign based on our vision of the future."

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Just Between Friends Helps Get Recall Items Off the Street

CATHERINE DOE

Did you ever wonder if you were buying products that have been recalled when shopping at a second-hand store? It can be even more dangerous when shopping for baby equipment.

Just Between Friends, a kids' gear and clothing consignment store for newborns through teens, is having its spring sale March 23-29 at the former Ross in the Sequoia Mall. During the sale, the store will offer a "Recall Station" to educate customers on all the recently recalled children's products. Laura Ancheta, who owns the company, explained that they have a recall specialist, Martha Haley, on their staff who prints a new recall book each month that has all the latest products from across the country.

"Martha can identify a majority of these items immediately," said Ancheta. "She works the sale when clients drop off their merchandise and picks out all items that have been recalled. We will have the books available at the sale. The Recall Station will have full-color photos. The book is really nice and it's about 200 pages long."

The most controversial baby item on the market right now is the Fisher-Price Soothe & Glow Seahorse. It is the seventh best-selling toddler toy on Amazon.com, but parents say when they change the batteries, it gets dangerously hot, starts smoking and is a fire hazard.

One parent reported that when she changed the batteries for the first time it felt hot, and she heard a sizzling noise. Then the battery coils started heating up, and smoke poured out of the toy.

Fisher-Price fixed the problem with the Soothe & Glow Seahorse by modifying the housing from three to two batteries. But all the older and defective models of the Soothe & Glow Seahorses are still in family homes and on store shelves. But you will not find them at Just Between Friends. "We have already received two of these toys but we are pulling them out," said Ancheta. "We will not be selling them."

The next biggest recall item has been the Graco car seat. According to *International Business Times*, "Last month, Graco issued a voluntary recall for approximately 3.7 million of their child safety seats due to malfunctioning buckles. Graco identified that food and dried liquids can make some harness buckles progressively more difficult to open over time or become stuck in a latched position."

"We will be looking closely for these and make sure these do not make it in the sale as well," said Ancheta.

All drop-side cribs were recalled a couple years ago. Just Between Friends is going to do a crib buyback program where they give a $50 gift certificate to people who bring recalled cribs to their sale. "This helps get them off the street," said Ancheta.

Just Between Friends of Visalia and Fresno offers Central Valley families a chance to recycle their maternity and children's items and save on the items they need for their growing family. Their merchandise is organized by gender and size, and by brand and category.

The Just Between Friend's sale in Fresno will be April 10-12. Check the store's website for the location.

Highland Elementary School sixth grade students in Visalia receive a hands-on lesson in solar power.

VUSD Celebrates Solar Power

STAFF REPORTS

Highland Elementary School students experienced a hands-on lesson in solar power at the ceremonial unveiling of Visalia Unified School District's new solar installations.

The sixth-grade students learned the basics of how sunshine becomes air conditioning in their classrooms, used solar power to run a small fan and then connected each of the small solar panels to replicate the larger solar installations on their campus.

Highland Elementary School is one of the 12 VUSD campuses that now have solar panels providing shade over parking lots and playgrounds, and providing power that is expected to save the district over $2 million in the first five years, according to VUSD Superintendent Craig Wheaton.

"That's real money – money that will stay in the general fund for kids and campuses," added Rick Brown, president of TerraVerde Renewable Partners, the consultant on the solar project.

Brown explained that the solar projects, partially funded by Measure E, will be monitored "in real time" to ensure their proper operation. Should a problem arise, the school district will be quickly informed so that the concern can be rectified.

VUSD has taken strides in recent years to reduce energy costs, but the demand for power during early fall and late spring caused the district to incur costly peak usage fees, while the summertime usage was generally low. The solar installation allows the district to collect power during the summer months to offset costs during the school year.

For more information on solar and other Measure E-funded projects, call Robert Groeber at 730-7529, or Craig Wheaton at 730-7522.

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Water

Continued from p. 1

manager of the Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District, to give a short presentation on the condition of the Kaweah Basin. Larsen lauded the city council for taking what he considered sound ways to deal with the drought. In explaining the dire situation, Larsen said that the Kaweah basin had only 28% of its average water, and even that was eroding every day we don't get a storm event. When surface water is not available farmers start pumping. Usually 70% of a farmer's water comes from surface and 30% comes from the ground. In a year like this that number is flipped. Larson said that the water table is going down fifteen inches every year and is now down to 125 feet.

Today, ground water is a property right, but California is the only state in the country where this is true. Just like the surface water is regulated, Larsen predicted that the regulation of ground water is going to happen this year. Fortunately, he said, management will be local, but if the local government doesn't do it right the state is going to step in. The ground water situation, along with the fact that 800,000 acres of farm land is being fallowed, and thousands of citrus will die, all pointed to the fact that Visalia needs to act now.

Collins' reaction was, "What is this going to do to the economy when you fallow 800,000 acres?"

In the end the council was politely arguing about a difference of ten minutes of watering and a few more watering days per year. None of the members got exactly what they wanted, but under a sense of civic duty and urgency all negotiated to make sure something got passed. After four or five attempts to pass the ordinance, Shuklian finally hit on the perfect balance to get a majority. The fully amended ordinance can be read the City of Visalia's website. The ordinance doesn't go into effect officially until April 17th but because we are in the middle of a three year drought, all residents are encouraged to start compling now.

Updates are available at http://www.gogreenvisalia.org.

Tulare County DA Candidates File Papers

Tulare County District Attorney Tim Ward and his challenger, former Deputy District Attorney Ralph F. Kaelble, both officially filed papers with the Tulare County Elections Office for the June 3rd election.

Ward has served as Tulare County's District Attorney since December 16, 2012. Retiring District Attorney Phil Cline recommended him for the position and the Tulare County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved his appointment.

As the district attorney, he assembled an experienced management team to lead prosecutors, criminal investigators and professional staff in the pursuit of justice and the care of victims. Under his leadership, the conviction rate has remained high. He developed the successful Crimes Against Children Unit, he dedicated resources to fighting agricultural crime and elder abuse, and made clear to his staff his determination to protect the most vulnerable of victims.

"Under my watch, we are recruiting experienced attorneys back into the office," said Ward. "Our morale is high, we have an outstanding team of prosecutors dedicated to public service and the pursuit of justice."

Kaelble, who announced his campaign for Tulare County District Attorney last July, served as a Tulare County prosecutor for nearly 14 years.

"This election is about protecting the safety of our community. Filing the paperwork furthers my commitment to the citizens of Tulare County and my dedication to justice," Kaelble commented. "I want to thank all my supporters who are helping make this possible."

Kaelble has been endorsed by six local law enforcement agencies, including the Tulare County Deputy Sheriff's Association and the Tulare County Probation Association, as well as the police officer associations of the Visalia, Lindsay, Dinuba and Exeter police departments.

Macareno

Continued from p. 4

see what the needs are in this county, you know? We don't have the jobs that we need here, or the university. We don't have the infrastructure to bring in quality-type jobs. And I think that's what everybody wants and needs in this area are jobs. So we need to draw away from the political lines and say, "What do we need in this particular county?" Now, I'm a Democrat, because in the political process you have to pick one or the other to have some kind of traction. Now, I believe that Democrats, the Democratic platform, best represents the needs of this particular community. Whether it's heavily Republican or heavily Democratic, the platform of the Democratic Party I believe is what supports this area more than the Republican Party. And it is tough, but that message needs to go over those party lines. You know, we got to look at what we need, and not because I have an R or I have a D. It's important that we look at what the needs are and address those.

HOW DO YOU THINK GOVERNOR BROWN IS DOING SO FAR?

I'm very happy that when the governor took office he told us up front that it was going to be a very tough time. That we were going to have unions that are not going to be happy, we're going to have business people that are not going to be happy, but that we needed to tighten the belt. And he did it. He was successful. Democrats worked behind him. We had to swallow something that we really didn't want to happen, but we knew it had to happen for the survivability of our state, for us to continue forward, and I think he's doing an absolutely wonderful job for all Californians. I'm definitely very pleased with his work.

WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS ON GUNS – ON GUN CONTROL, THE EXPLOSION OF GUN VIOLENCE, AND THE PROLIFERATION OF FIREARMS?

I'm for gun control, and an extension of it. I'm very clear with that. I think that gun violence is a tragic thing; we see it more and more every day. In fact, just recently we've seen two shootings in the city of Visalia, and I believe we need to do something about gun control. Make it more restrictive. I don't like the idea of taking away people's rights. I'm not for that. However, we have to work at what's best for the general good. And I think for the general good, may it be here in Tulare County or may it be back east, we have to have more control over issuing guns and ammunition.

THE ACA WILL NOT COVER UNDOCUMENTED PEOPLE. WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THAT?

I think the ACA and any new law that comes into play is a work in progress. I think that we'll see some changes. That's an issue I would like to see figured out. To be quite honest, I don't have a really strong position either way, particularly because I believe that the law will be changing, it'll be flexing with the issues. It's a major piece of legislation. I didn't think that most people would think that would be the perfect law to address everybody's needs, but I think in general it's a good thing for all Americans, particularly here in Tulare County. As far as covering everybody, my position basically is wait and see, and I think there will be some kinks that will have to be worked out.

WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS ON FRACKING?

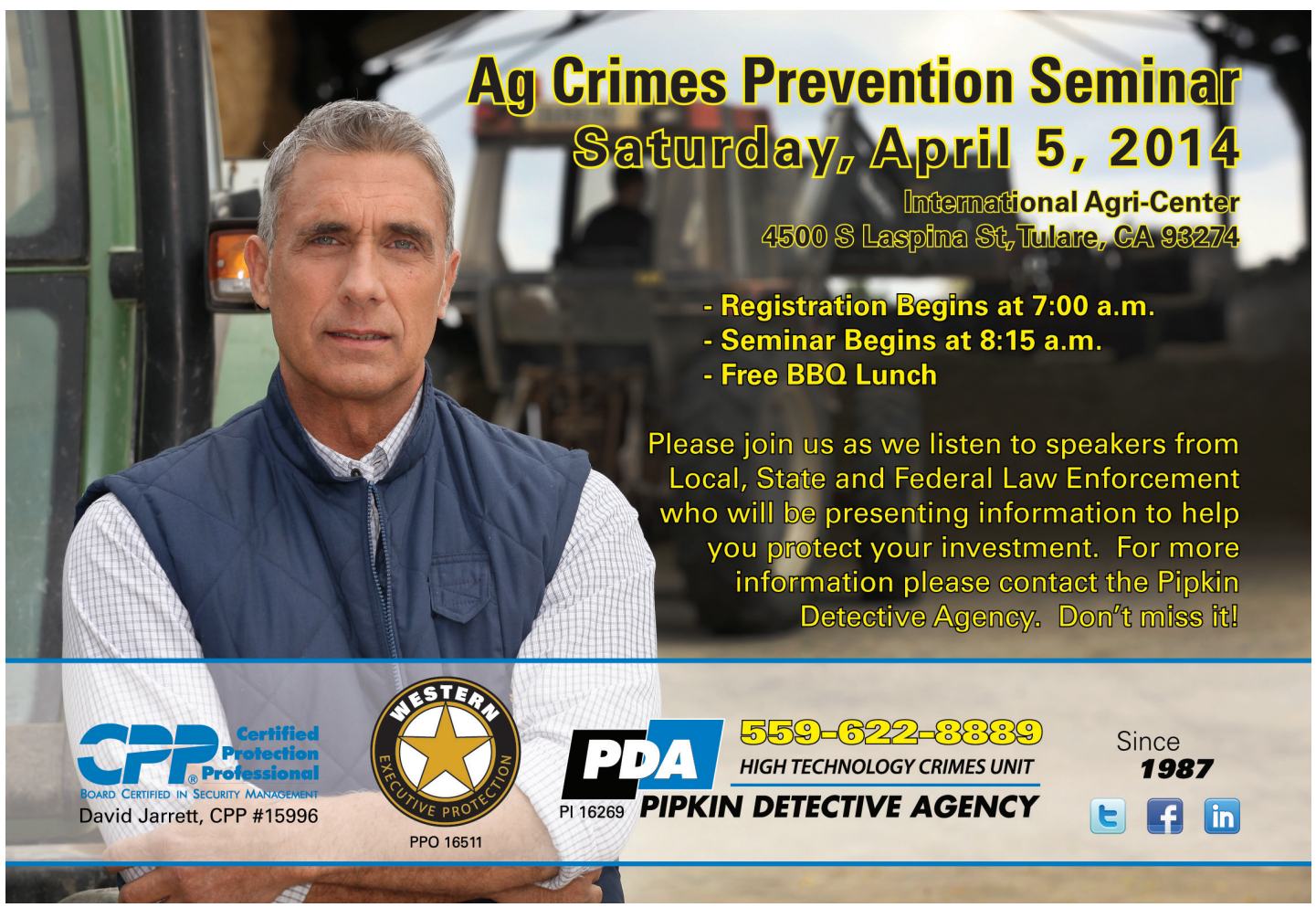
I'm totally against fracking in every which way and form. I think we need to protect our water. It's one of those things I don't think is a partisan issue. It's an issue that's important to everyone, not only here in the Central Valley, but all throughout California. You know, people need to realize that our farmers need water, and we need to continue to have a strong economy, and we can't have it if we don't have the water to do that. We need to figure out how we're going to be able to keep our water within our region. One voter told me that a lot of the water that is bottle and sold and taken out of the state is from California. She asked why we didn't stop bottling the water and keep it here. You know, a legislator or representative should have that ability to connect with the voters so that their ideas and solutions can be actually presented. I think that water is going to be a big, big issue to address. It's very important, and the fracking industry, if you will, is not going to help us in any which way. So I'm definitely 100% against fracking, and I stand strong and proud in regard to that.

PURSUANT TO THAT, WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE WATER BOND INITIATIVE?

Quite frankly, I haven't been too up to speed with the bond at the moment, so I really can't make a comment on that just yet.

WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS ON THE HIGH-SPEED RAIL?

The high-speed rail, I think, is very important to the local economy, but it's more important environmentally. I think that if we don't build something such as the high-speed rail between Los Angeles and San Francisco that we're going to see an increase in bad air. We already have bad air. The last thing we need is another freeway. With the projections of population increases in metropolitan areas, and even in the Central Valley, we need to have something like the high-speed rail and not more freeways. So I support the high-speed rail.



'A Day in the Life' of a Tulare County Teen

STAFF REPORTS

If you have ever been curious about how teens spend their day or what they may be thinking, the Tulare County Library and ValleyPBS have partnered to give you some insight.

With this partnership, the library aims to strengthen its commitment to digital literacy by allowing teens to check out iPad minis for one week to film a "day in the life." The library will support the teens involved in the project by providing training, supervision and the tools to record, edit and upload their own documentary. The films will be uploaded to the ValleyPBS ByYou website as well as the library's website.

The project is intended to teach teens ages 14 through 18 information and communication technology literacy, and encourage them to be creative with digital media. The two-month comprehensive program will include the following activities:

Teens and their parents will attend one mandatory orientation session. During this session, Teen Librarian Faythe Arredondo will outline the personal and professional risks that each participant runs by including particular information or subject matter in their video. Parents and teens will discuss information and media literacy, demonstrate an understanding of the potential consequences of disseminating personal information online, and learn to evaluate and self-censor information that may prove libelous or otherwise pose a moral or legal issue. Even if a teen plans to use their own device, they are still required to attend a session.

The teens will receive training on how to use the iPad mini to express their creativity. They will learn to record, edit and post their video online in accordance with guidelines that will be provided.

At the conclusion of the trainings, program participants will have one week to film, edit and upload the videos of their "day" onto the ValleyPBS ByYou site. The videos may be prepared either at home or using equipment at the library.

Teens who wish to participate are invited to attend one of three orientation sessions to be held at the Visalia Branch Library on April 1 and April 3 from 6-7pm, and April 4 from 5-6pm. Additional sessions will be scheduled at the Dinuba Branch Library.

This project was funded by a grant awarded to the Tulare County Library through the Library Services and Technology Act, administered by California State Library.

For more information, call 713-2703.

Visalia Police Department Now Uses Nixle

The Visalia Police Department is now utilizing a new communications service to send valuable community information directly to residents using the latest technology.

The Nixle Community Information Service allows the VPD to create and publish messages to be delivered to residents instantly via cell phone, text message and/or email. Notifications can also be accessed online at Nixle's website at www.nixle.com.

Messages may include crime and arrest reports, as well as other relevant safety and community event information. The service is secure, reliable and easy to use. Subscribers can choose the way in which alerts are received, whether it is by email, text message or over the web.

Nixle builds on the foundations of other public-to-public communication services, such as Twitter, Facebook and MySpace, but adds a key component: security. When citizens receive information from the VPD via Nixle, they know it can be trusted.

Residents of Visalia and those in neighboring communities can immediately begin receiving pertinent information via text message, email, and web by registering at www.nixle.com.

Tulare County Library Offers Happy Trails

A unique program in the Tulare County Library's "Getting to Know" series will be a presentation by the Happy Trails Riding Academy on Thursday, March 27, at 6:30pm.

Happy Trails Academy offers therapeutic horsemanship, a type of treatment for children and adults who suffer from physical, cognitive, emotional and psychological disabilities. This alternative to traditional therapy uses horseback riding to promote physical wellbeing, psychological benefits and social development by the rider.

Among the physical benefits are decreased spasticity from the stretching of tight muscles, increased joint range of motion, reduced abnormal movements, and improved respiration, circulation, appetite and digestion. In addition, overall sensory integration is strengthened. Psychological benefits fostered by therapeutic riding include improved self-confidence, increased interest in one's life and the outside world, and the development of patience, emotional control, self-discipline and a sense of normality. Socially, patients develop friendships, increase their experiences and enhance their capacity for enjoyment.

The Getting to Know programs sponsored by the Tulare County Library are designed to offer county residents an introduction to and information about people, issues and organizations in the Central Valley. Programs are being held the fourth Thursday of the month at 6:30pm at the Visalia Branch Library throughout the spring.

Stan Carrizosa, president of the College of the Sequoias, will be the featured speaker in April. Visalia Mayor Steve Nelsen and State Senator Jean Fuller have been guests. For more information, call 713-2707 or visit www.tularecountylibrary.org.

Science & Engineering Fair Begins Next Week

The 29th Annual Tulare County Science & Engineering Fair will be held March 24-28 at the Sequoia Mall in Visalia during regular mall hours. Over 170 science projects, representing the work of students in grades 3-12 from throughout Tulare County, will be on display. Students participating in the event submit their projects to showcase the scientific method, which is the testing of a scientific hypothesis through observation.

Judging will take place that evening with over 50 engineers, science educators, meteorologists, physicians and practicing scientists selecting the top 30 projects for "Sweepstakes Awards." Students compete in ten categories, including: Behavioral and Social Sciences; Botany; Earth and Space; Engineering and Mathematics; Environmental Science; Medicine and Health; Microbiology and Biochemistry; Physical Science; Product Testing and Materials Science; and Zoology.

On March 25 and 26, community members visiting the Sequoia Mall will be able to vote for their favorite projects. Projects with the most votes will be presented with "Community Choice Awards." An awards ceremony will be held March 27, at 6:30pm in the center court of the Sequoia Mall. Deserving student scientists will be awarded plaques in each of the following areas: Sweepstakes, Environmental Vision and Community Choice. Additionally, those projects that will continue on to the California State Science Fair will be announced.

"The projects address an amazing array of scientific issues such as energy usage, human health, food production and environmental concerns," says Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak. "We're always impressed with the creativity and thoroughness of the projects in the science fair."

For more information, visit www.tcoe.org/sciencefair.

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Mission Oak High School Students Launch 'Harvesting Hope'

RICHARD PURAGGANAN

Tulare County is one of the larger counties that make up the agricultural-based area of the Golden State, which thrives off of the crops that are harvested year-round through the back-breaking labor of field workers. It is also the poorest of all counties in California.

There is a great abundance of produce grown here in the Valley. Despite this abundance, a quiet pandemic has found its way into the homes of friends, neighbors and families, sometimes including our own. It's called hunger.

A classroom at Mission Oak High School may have found a solution. Mr. Mendoza, the "Cultural History of the United States" teacher, challenged his students to create a class project that in some way could improve Mission Oak High School and the surrounding community. This challenge was part of the Tulare County Board of Supervisors' "Step Up Youth Challenge" grant program. After conducting extensive research, the students found information about hunger in the Valley that was too alarming to ignore. The class decided it was time to help their community fight food insecurity and restore hope to those in need.

They found that there was already an existing organization that had already taken up this cause. "Be Healthy Tulare" is a grass-roots organization that was co-founded three years ago by Tulare Union math teacher David Terrel and his wife, Dr. Sarah Ramirez, a professor at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. The goal of Be Healthy Tulare is to cultivate a healthier Tulare County through compassion, community building, education and, most importantly, service.

The two community organizers developed a series of programs that caught the attention of the class of students at Mission Oak. The first is a free community garden that was created on an empty lot in Pixley in order to provide fresh fruits and vegetables that otherwise would not be accessible to impoverished families. It was a perfect opportunity for Mr. Mendoza's class because 40 percent of the students at Mission Oak live in Pixley.

Another program created by Be Healthy Tulare is "Tulare County Harvest" which asks homeowners with fruit trees to consider donating excess fruit to Tulare County's food bank. TC Harvest then organizes a trained volunteer group and caravans throughout Tulare County to pick fruit trees, providing homeowners the fruit they want to keep and the ability to donate the rest.

The students were so excited to help fight hunger that they named their class project "Harvesting Hope." For the past three months, the students have kept themselves occupied at the Pixley garden on Saturdays and with TC Harvest on Sundays. Recently, the Harvesting Hope students made school-wide presentations that informed their peers of the impact of hunger in their community, encouraging students such as Estevan Barajas to step up and make a difference.

Now, Harvesting Hope has rapidly expanded from a classroom project to a community-wide campaign to support Be Healthy Tulare in providing nutritional food that is distributed to families in need throughout Tulare County. Barajas described his first experience picking fruit with Harvesting Hope as being "fun, positive, fulfilling, and a great experience to help support the community and the people we grew up with."

Mission Oak High School students Harvesting Hope.

Harvesting Hope participants at work.

Mission Oak high school students show the fruits of their labor.

The contribution being made by students at Mission Oak High School was described by Dr. Ramirez as "very moving being able to witness young people be a part of a great cause that gives back to the community. Through a rippling effect, the 'planted seed' will grow little by little in our homes and community as a whole so that someday real world problems may be solved through the help of education."

These past two Sundays, Be Healthy Tulare and Harvesting Hope held their largest events to date. A local farmer had donated a five-acre crop of tangerines to the food bank. The two organizations worked together to bring over 170 volunteers, mostly students from Mission Oak High School, to come and harvest the fruit. In the two days of picking, they brought in over 10,000 pounds of fresh produce to the food bank. Over the past three months, with the generosity of local homeowners donating their backyard fruit, they have exceeded 20,000 pounds.

Antonio Rodriguez, the assistant superintendent for the Tulare Joint Union High School District, grew up in the Central Valley and had experience as a field worker when he was a teenager. He recalled having worked long, hot, tiring hours out of necessity to help support his family. He came out to support Harvesting Hope for the very first time, describing the sight as, "fantastic seeing community members coming together to help those in need by simply volunteering some of their time on a Sunday morning. It's really fulfilling to see such a large group of young individuals giving back to their community."

Harvesting Hope has, in turn, provided hope by inspiring "people who are complete strangers to work side by side willing to commit to service to help the needy in the community," as Dr. Ramirez said.

Many of the adults and some students who volunteer have worked with their families in the surrounding fields. Emma Onsurez, a first-time volunteer, described her childhood experience in the fields as being "hot, terrible, tiresome and very hard due to the back-breaking labor of climbing trees in order to fill the bags on your shoulders with fruit while having to balance yourself." She also mentioned that this is a good opportunity for young people to experience firsthand the true value of having an education and learning to appreciate what they have.

To register your fruit trees for harvesting, please visit www.behealthytulare.com or call 202-3273. You can also visit Harvesting Hope on Facebook.

Richard Purugganan is a senior at Mission Oak High School in Tulare, who plans to attend COS and continue at a CSU. He will be the first in his family to attend college.

Bertolino Appointed Tulare County Public Defender

STAFF REPORTS

The Tulare County Board of Supervisors announced that Lisa Bertolino has been appointed to permanently fill the public defender position. Bertolino was appointed interim public defender in December, following Michael Sheltzer's appointment by Governor Jerry Brown to serve a judgeship in Tulare County Superior Court.

Lisa Bertolino

"Based on her experience within the department, the board is confident Lisa will do a fantastic job leading the Public Defender's Office," said Board of Supervisors Chairman Phil Cox.

Bertolino, who has served as the county's assistant public defender since 2003, has been with Tulare County since 1989. Prior to her career with Tulare County, she was a certified public accountant.

"I am very pleased to have the opportunity to serve the citizens of this community and our clients," Bertolino said. "The Public Defender's Office is an integral part of our justice system. We are ethically bound to look out for the best interests of our clients, and in so doing, indirectly serve every citizen of Tulare County. I am very proud of this office and our employees."

Bertolino has a law degree from the Ventura College of Law and Bachelor of Science degree in business administration with an accounting emphasis from California State University, Humboldt. She has also been a member of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission since 2001.

The Board of Supervisors officially appointed Bertolino public defender after its March 4 meeting. She will earn $162,000 annually. Her first day as public defender was March 9.

Dairy Producers Begin Search for Royalty

STAFF REPORTS

The local dairy industry is now accepting applications from young women wishing to compete for the District 7 Dairy Princess crown.

The winner will represent the dairy industry in District 7 (Kings County) as a spokeswoman, and will also represent the California dairy industry in appearances at schools, fairs, industry meetings, service clubs, parades and with the media. The newly selected princess will also participate in a week of training that includes industry tours, presentation and etiquette training.

Contestants must meet the following requirements: 1) Be at least a junior in high school up to 21 years of age by contest date; 2) Be unmarried; and 3) Family must own a dairy farm, work for the dairy industry or have a dairy-related background. Applicants are urged to submit their applications as soon as possible. The application deadline is Monday, April 14.

The District 7 contest is sponsored by the District 7 Dairy Princess Committee and the California Milk Advisory Board (CMAB). The gala event will be held Friday, June 27, at the Hanford Civic Auditorium, 400 N. Douty St., Hanford. The evening begins at 6pm with a social hour and is followed by the contest and dinner at 7pm.

Current Dairy Princess Mary Barcellos II of Hanford will relinquish her crown to the winner, who will represent the dairy industry in Kings County. Scholarships will be awarded.

Application forms may be obtained from District 7 Dairy Princess Chairperson, Carolina Evangelo, at (209) 777-8995 or cevangelo@ymail.com, the CMAB office at (209) 525-6875 or they may be accessed online at www.RealCaliforniaMilk.com/about/dairy-princesses.

California is the nation's leading milk producer. It also produces more butter, ice cream, yogurt and nonfat dry milk than any other state. Dairy products made with Real California milk can be identified by the Real California Milk seal, which certifies that the products are made exclusively with milk produced on California dairy farms. The state is the second-largest producer of cheese, which is available nationally under the Real California Cheese seal.

Tulare County Ranks High in Sales of Tobacco Products Near Schools

STAFF REPORTS

New data reveals that Tulare County has more stores that sell candy, mint and liquor-flavored non-cigarette tobacco products, and are near schools, than the statewide average. This finding is part of new data released this month on the availability and marketing of tobacco, alcohol and unhealthy food products in stores that sell tobacco.

The statewide survey collected information from more than 7,300 retail stores – including convenience, supermarket, liquor, tobacco, small market, discount, drug and big-box stores – in all 58 counties, to shed light on what products are most promoted in our communities. Nearly 700 public health representatives, community volunteers and youth participated in the survey.

"There are too many stores near to schools that are marketing and selling tobacco and alcohol products to our young people here in Tulare County," said Dr. Karen Haught, Tulare County public health officer. "HHSA and our community stakeholders are committed to partnering with quick-mart stores, school officials and parents in Tulare County to make our community healthier and more aware of the dangers of tobacco and alcohol consumption."

Survey results for Tulare County show positive statistics for the percentage of stores that accept CalFresh or WIC, stores that feature healthy exterior advertising, and a lower percentage than the state on stores that sell e-cigarettes. However, the following statistics remain a serious concern for Tulare County officials:

- 85.3% of stores sell candy, mint and liquor flavored non-cigarette tobacco products and are near schools, compared to the state average of 75.3%
- 84.6% of stores sell tobacco products and only 31.6% sell milk, versus the state average of 79.4 and 37.2%
- Only 33.8% of stores sell fresh fruits or vegetables, compared to the state average of 42.4%
- 58.9% of Tulare County stores sell sugar-sweetened beverages at the check-out and are near schools, as compared to only 55.6% statewide
- 82.6% of stores sell alcohol, versus the statewide average of only 71.3%
- 69.2% of stores sell chewing tobacco, versus the state average of only 56.1%

HHSA tularehhsa.org

The results suggest a relationship between these negative statistics and outcomes such as:

- 72.5% of adults in Tulare County are overweight or obese, compared to the state average of only 59.8%
- 41% of youth used alcohol in the past 30 days, compared to the state average of 35%
- 17.8% of adults and 12% of youth smoke in Tulare County, versus the state average of 13.8% of adults and 10.5% of youth

"The need for easy availability of healthy fruits and vegetables is one of the most important issues in Tulare County, and one that can either lead to a healthy lifestyle, or to a rise in chronic disease and obesity levels in both our children and adult populations," said Tammie Weyker, media spokesperson for Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency. "We want to work with our small business owners on choosing to carry fresh fruits and vegetables and still meet and exceed their bottom line so that our families can have the option to feed their children healthier foods."

Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community is a statewide campaign – formed by tobacco prevention, nutrition, and alcohol prevention partners working in collaboration – to improve the health of Californians by informing them about the impacts of unhealthy product marketing in the retail environment.

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Lot 14	Tulare Business Park	3.01 Acres	$ 555,000
Lot 15	Tulare Business Park	1.43 Acres	$ 350,000
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News in Brief...

HELP SAVE THE TULARE COUNTY FAIR

On the cusp of the Tulare County Fair's 95th anniversary, the nonprofit Friends of the Tulare County Fair Foundation is calling for financial support to save the fair. Due to the elimination of funding from the State of California, the Tulare County Fair is in jeopardy, noted fair CEO Pamela Fyock. The Tulare County Fair Children's Foundation, a charitable organization, has been revived with new leadership and a new name – Friends of the Tulare County Fair.

A fundraiser will be held Saturday, March 22, featuring dinner, guest speaker Dr. Scott Vernon and dancing to music by Branded Heart. Sponsorships are available. Tickets are $100 per person or $1,000 for a reserved table for 10. For tickets and sponsorship information, contact Fyock at 686-4707 or email pamelafyock@tcfair.org.

VISALIA TO BREAK GROUND ON $147 MILLION PROJECT

The City of Visalia will embark on the largest public works project in its history with the $147 million upgrade of its Water Conservation Plant. A groundbreaking ceremony will be held at 1pm on Thursday, March 27, at the plant at 7579 Avenue 288 in Visalia. The project will upgrade the city's wastewater treatment and provide the opportunity for significant recycling of water in and around Visalia. The project is being funded through a low-interest loan from the State Water Resources Control Board.

TULARE COUNTY REGIONAL HOUSING NEEDS PLAN

The Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG) has released the draft Regional Housing Needs Plan for Tulare County. The plan includes the distribution of housing units for cities and unincorporated areas for use in updating General Plan Housing Elements to meet state requirements. A 60-day public comment period for the plan will conclude on May 12.

If no appeals from the local agencies are received, the TCAG Board will consider the draft plan at its regularly scheduled meeting at 1pm on June 30 at the Tulare County Ag Auditorium, 4437 S. Laspina, Tulare. For information call 623-0450 or visit www.tularecog.org.

COS OFFERS 156 SUMMER CLASSES, 1,500+ SEATS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

College of the Sequoias has expanded its summer session this year, opening 156 classes and more than 1,500 class seats across three sessions during the summer semester. Classes for summer and fall are searchable now at cos.edu.

In addition to tripling summer semester capacity, COS is offering 1,160 classes with 51,980 class seats for the coming fall. Scholarship money has been made available specifically for this summer semester. The application is available at www.cos.edu/scholarships. The application deadline is March 31.

AG CRIME PREVENTION SEMINAR SET IN TULARE

In response to a costly rash of agricultural crimes in the Central Valley, Western Executive Protection is offering a daylong Ag Crime Prevention Seminar on Saturday, April 5, at the International Agri-Center. The day begins at Heritage Complex with registration, continental breakfast and networking from 7 to 8:15am, followed by presentations on how to prevent ag crime, the various types of ag crimes and how to respond in the case of criminal activity.

A barbecue lunch will be provided, and attendees will be able to visit displays set up by Tulare, Kings and Kern law enforcement, businesses focused on preventing ag crime, the Ag Crimes Unit of the Tulare County District Attorney's Office, Homeland Security and more.

The seminar is offered at no charge, thanks to the support of sponsors. It is expected to conclude no later than 3pm. For information or to register, contact Rocky Pipkin, Western Executive Protection, at 622-8889 or rocky@pipkindetectiveagency.com.

BRENDA BROKER NAMED SUPERVISING DEPUTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Tulare County District Attorney Tim Ward announced the promotion of Brenda Broker to the position of supervising deputy district attorney. "I am proud to have Brenda Broker join the management team of the Office of the District Attorney," said Ward. "Brenda brings a wealth of experience to her new position, and her promotion continues my commitment to having a well-qualified, diverse management staff."

Broker joined the Office of the District Attorney as a deputy district attorney in January 2004. In her ten years with the office, she has handled a wide variety of cases, including assignments as a sexual assault prosecutor and homicide prosecutor. Most recently, she was assigned as the first ever child/infant homicide prosecutor for the office. Broker was named the Prosecutor of the Year at the 31st Knights of Columbus Public Safety Award ceremony in January.

TOM COLLISHAW TO LEAD SELF-HELP ENTERPRISES

Following the announcement that Self-Help Enterprises CEO and President Peter Carey would retire after 40 years with the organization, the nonprofit housing and community development organization named Tom Collishaw, its current vice president, director of development, to that position effective July 1.

During Carey's 25 years as president and CEO, the organization developed thousands of single-family and multi-family housing units, and has been a leader in local home ownership, housing rehabilitation, sewer and water development, and community development efforts. Collishaw, who has 32 years of experience at Self-Help Enterprises, will continue its mission to assist low-income residents in the San Joaquin Valley to improve their living conditions.

DISTRESSED HOUSING MARKET SHRINKS DRAMATICALLY

Vastly improved home prices over the past five years have changed the landscape of the state and local distressed housing market, which is now just a fraction of what it was during the Great Recession, reports the California Association of Realtors (C.A.R.).

In January 2009, 69.5 percent of all homes sold in California were distressed, which includes short sales and real estate-owned (REOs) properties. Five years later, that figure has shrunk to 15.6 percent. During the same time period, California's median home price has soared more than 64 percent from $249,960 in January 2009 to $410,990 in January 2014.

In Tulare County, the distressed market in January 2009 was 45.8 percent. The distressed market in the county has now has shrunk to 20 percent.

LENNAR CELEBRATES GRAND OPENING AT THE VISTAS IN VISALIA

Lennar introduced The Chateau Series at Vistas, Visalia's newest luxury home community, with a grand opening event on March 15-16. The event included tours of fully furnished model homes, which offer eight diverse floorplans. Priced from the low $200,000's, the homes offer approximately 1,766 to 2,969 square feet of living space, up to four bedrooms and three bathrooms, and a two or three-bay garage, depending on the floorplan.

TULARE COUNTY SELECTS TYLER TECHNOLOGIES ENERGOV SOFTWARE

Tulare County signed a contract with Plano, Texas-based Tyler Technologies for the company's EnerGov planning, permitting and licensing software suite. The agreement includes related professional services, training and support. Once implemented, EnerGov will integrate with the county's GIS platform to provide timesaving permitting and inspection field services, as well as real-time spatial analytics to improve planning, forecasting and decision-making within the county. The county conducted a competitive process that included an extensive product and customer evaluation before choosing Tyler.

BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY HOMESERVICES ADDS LOCAL AFFILIATE

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices, the new real estate brokerage network operated by HSF Affiliates LLC, announced the signing of 22 additional affiliates to the network, including Prudential California Realty in Visalia. Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices, based in Irvine, now accounts for more than 26,000 agents and 700 offices in 33 states since it began transitioning affiliates in September.

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Political Fix

Continued from p. 3

unofficially endorsing Tim Donnelly?

Ms. Swearengin is used to the pressure of hard work and has assembled a talented team to run Fresno. The city will not lose its strong mayoral form of government because you can't run a city of 500,000 people, and a $1 billion dollar budget, by committee. Fresno should grateful she forged a close relationship with President Obama. She would have done the same with Mr. Romney. She has to support the HSR in order to bring jobs to Fresno, but may change her mind if she becomes controller. And there will be no special election because Ms. Swearengin is not going to win. Being the only Republican on the ballot for Controller she will probably get past the primary, but no one really knows who she is outside of the valley.

Shawn Steel, former state Republican Party Chair has the right attitude. "She is an outstanding mayor and a fresh face in the Republican Party statewide. She's going to be one of our best opportunities to win a statewide office – if not our very best." he said.

Representatives from Cal Water, the California Department of Public Health, Self-Help Enterprises, and the West Goshen Mutual Water Company board of directors

Cal Water Breaks Ground on West Goshen Extension Project

STAFF REPORTS

West Goshen residents will no longer struggle to have safe water to use and drink, as California Water Service Company (Cal Water) broke ground on a water mainline extension project that will connect the West Goshen community with its Visalia water system. Cal Water and its partners, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and Self-Help Enterprises, commemorated this important milestone with a groundbreaking ceremony on March 18 at the West Goshen well site, 5155 Avenue 308, Goshen.

West Goshen, a town with around 500 residents, had been unable to deliver water that met water quality standards since the last of the town's two wells malfunctioned in early 2013. CDPH approached Cal Water to assist the town with an emergency disinfection plan. Together with CDPH and Self-Help Enterprises, the group developed a temporary plan to repair and maintain the town's water system.

CDPH has now provided a grant to permanently connect the entire West Goshen system to Cal Water's system, through a master-metered connection overseen by the West Goshen Mutual Water Company until individual services can be installed for each property. This state funding will prevent Cal Water's existing Visalia District customers from bearing the costs of adding these new customers to the system.

"This project would not be possible without the commitment of all of our partners to do the right thing," said Cal Water District Manager Scott Bailey. "From beginning to end, CDPH, Self-Help Enterprises, West Goshen Mutual and Cal Water have all been focused on getting a reliable supply of water that meets all federal and state water quality standards to West Goshen residents."

The first phase of the project to connect the system through a master meter is expected to take about two months. Afterward, Cal Water expects construction to connect individual customer services, which includes new water main, hydrant and meter installations, to take about six months.

Cal Water serves about 132,200 people through 41,200 service connections in Visalia. The company has provided water service in the area since 1927. Additional information may be obtained online at www.calwater.com.

Environmental Work Considered at Old National Parks Dumpsite

STAFF REPORTS

The National Park Service (NPS), in coordination with Environmental Cost Management, Inc., is notifying the public of environmental work being considered at a dumpsite used in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks (SEKI) from 1931 to 1965. A sampling of waste material and related soils will be done in the dump area this spring to determine appropriate response activities.

The NPS is in the process of assessing this site in accordance with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA). The CERCLA process has a key community outreach component, established by Congress in 1986, to ensure that citizens living or working near CERCLA sites are given the opportunity to influence decisions affecting their community.

In order to be notified of updates to this project or other CERCLA projects at SEKI, an interested member of the public may leave a comment with contact information on the NPS's Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) website at http://parkplanning.nps.gov/LowerKaweahCERCLA, or write to:

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks
Attn: Superintendent's Office
Lower Kaweah Site
47050 Generals Highway
Three Rivers, CA 93271

In addition to individual requests for information, notification and documents associated with this project and other CERCLA projects at SEKI will be placed in public repositories at local public libraries and on the PEPC website.

If you have specific project-related questions or concerns, contact ECM Representative Holly Trejo at htreyo@ecostmanage.com or (510) 964-4399, or Safety Manager Todd Payne at SEKI at (559) 565-3108.

Kings/Tulare Area Agency on Aging

Senior Legislature Election Nears

It is time to start thinking about the California Senior Legislature (CSL) elections! The CSL provides a forum through which older Californians can share and promote their legislative priorities. The purpose of the CSL is to develop proposals for legislation at both the State and Federal levels. When the "regular" legislators leave the Capitol for the fall holidays, the California Senior Legislature fills the vacant seats, gathering to voice their concerns and opinions on pending legislation that will impact the lives of senior citizens.

At its annual session, the CSL holds hearings on proposals that have been submitted by its members, to determine which of those proposals should be carried forward. Because the California Legislature takes the CSL's recommendations very seriously, its efforts could have a major impact on future senior-related legislation.

Anyone interested in being a candidate for our Planning and Service Area (PSA15) should begin preparations now. PSA 15 is comprised of Kings and Tulare Counties which sends two Senior Legislators to Sacramento: one Senior Senator and one Senior Assemblymember. It is the duty of the CSL representatives to attend the meetings of the California Senior Legislature and report back to the Kings/Tulare Area Agency on Aging (K/T AAA) Advisory Council on the activities of the CSL, track the bills for the Advisory Council, and, if requested, present the information to the Governing Board of the K/T AAA. In addition, the CSL representatives work with the K/T AAA staff on getting the information on CSL matters to seniors in the community.

Senior legislators are elected volunteers. They will be elected by the Advisory Council of the Kings/Tulare Area Agency on Aging on May 19, 2014. If you are at least 60 years of age, reside in Kings or Tulare County, and are a registered voter, you may qualify to represent your community in the California Senior Legislature. Completed application must be submitted by Tuesday April 15, 2014 at 5 p.m. Any senior interested in serving in the CSL may contact Christine Tidwell at 559-624-8063 for an application and additional information.

Water Storage is Key to Region's Future

J. PAUL HENDRIX

Tulare Irrigation District has proposed a new reservoir at McKay Point, near Lemon Cove and Woodlake, to provide new water storage, flood control and more efficient distribution of water for agriculture.

J. Paul Hendrix

The McKay Point project, proposed to be located north of the separation of the Kaweah and St. Johns rivers, is a joint venture of property owners Tulare Irrigation District (TID), the Consolidated Peoples Ditch Company and the Visalia & Kaweah Water Company. The reservoir is expected to take about 120 acres of the jointly owned 500 acres.

These three entities are responsible for making short- and long-term water-management decisions that directly impact our region's number one industry: agriculture.

TID, the lead agency, has a long history of water stewardship, having been organized in 1889. Today, TID operates and maintains 330 miles of canal and about 30 miles of pipeline, along with 1,250 acres of groundwater recharge/regulation basins.

The need for additional water storage is a statewide issue, and the idea of a reservoir at McKay Point has been under discussion for several years. The holdup has been financial, and a partnership with CEMEX was the missing piece.

CEMEX, an aggregates and building materials company, will excavate the reservoir site, process and sell the removed materials. The property owners will then receive a royalty on the sale of materials, which provides revenue that the owners anticipate will make the estimated $12 million reservoir construction project financially feasible. About half of the cost is for cut-off walls to minimize groundwater and surface water intrusion into the reservoir.

The project is now in the midst of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) process, which includes scoping meetings that allow residents and interested agencies to voice questions and concerns about potential environmental effects.

TID held three scoping meetings in February regarding the proposed reservoir. Comments received were used to finalize the list of items to be studied for their potential environmental impact. The EIR will disclose significant environmental impacts and related mitigation measures. The EIR will present project alternatives, including a "no-project" alternative, designed to eliminate and/or reduce the impacts.

It is important to note that the EIR is not a process of determining the merits of a project. It is a disclosure document that presents the results of good science and thorough analyses to ensure that we study environmental impacts as completely as possible. A considerable part of the EIR is devoted to local groundwater evaluations, given the reservoir's location in an area exhibiting shallow groundwater conditions. This fall, the draft EIR will be circulated for public review and comment, and another series of public meetings will be held.

The key components of the project are:

- More efficient capture and distribution of water for agricultural use. The new reservoir, and its water control features, will allow for water to be captured and more efficiently distributed downstream for agricultural use, when farmers need it, and when they would otherwise pump groundwater. Currently, during times of flood release from Terminus Dam, water not immediately needed is diverted to groundwater recharge basins or discharged to the historic Tulare Lake Bed. The reservoir will allow for increased upstream storage of this water.
- Flood control. During wet years, water will be diverted into the reservoir, thereby lessening the risk of water backing up into the streets of downtown Visalia and elsewhere. Water would be returned to the Lower Kaweah and the St. Johns rivers when it is safe and beneficial to do so.
- Power generation. The hydroelectric generators at the Terminus Dam outlets at Lake Kaweah will be able to produce more power, especially during times of peak demand, once the McKay Point reservoir is available. The resulting "green" power may provide revenue to support the maintenance of the reservoir and other projects as needed to ensure continued delivery of water to support agriculture.
- More water for local use. During wet years, floodwater from the Kaweah River, Dry Creek and Yokohl Creek typically floods farmland and/or is diverted to the Friant-Kern Canal for disposal in the Kern River near Bakersfield. The McKay Point Reservoir will capture some of this floodwater and hold it until it can be safely released back into the Kaweah and St. Johns rivers for downstream use or for groundwater recharge, which benefits the region.

Public hearing dates on the Draft EIR in the fall will be announced and posted on the McKay Point Reservoir project website, www.mckaypoint.com. For information, contact Paul Hendrix or Aaron Fukuda, Tulare Irrigation District, 686-3425; James Silva, Consolidated Peoples Ditch Co., 747-1177; or Richard Moss, Provost & Pritchard, 636-1166.

J. Paul Hendrix is the general manager of Tulare Irrigation District.

Tulare County EDC Responds

The Tulare County Board of Supervisors recently decided to pull its funding to the Tulare County Economic Development Corporation (EDC). The vote was 4-1, with Supervisor Pete Vander Poel the lone vote against this move. Comments made by the other four Supervisors called into question the performance of Board of Directors of the EDC and its staff.

The entire Administrative Board of the EDC, along with the vast majority of our 16 other board members, completely disagree with the County Supervisors' assessment of the EDC. We are very disappointed they have chosen to pull funding from the only organization in Tulare County that has been creating new jobs for our residents for the last 31 years. We are also disappointed by numerous misstatements of fact made by four of the County Supervisors.

The EDC Board was criticized for its work plan and its performance related to that work plan by the County Supervisors - who have been a part of the development, implementation and review of the performance of the EDC since its creation in 1983. All of the current County Supervisors have either served as a voting member or alternate member of the EDC Board of Directors, and have been part of every decision that they have criticized over the years.

In response to the Supervisors actions, the EDC Board of Directors has done some serious self-reflection. We are pleased to report the elected officials and private company representatives that serve on the Board remain committed to its role in creating jobs here in Tulare County.

The EDC is the primary marketing and business recruitment organization for the cities and communities of Tulare County. The EDC has consistently produced results in adding new jobs, new companies, and new revenues to local jurisdictions for 31 years. Over the last 10 years the EDC has played a role in the creation of approximately 2,400 new jobs in Tulare County. These jobs also have resulted in $619 million of new construction.

The decision by the Board of Supervisors does not appear to be about value or performance. Two recent studies by the Southern California Edison Company indicate the County has been getting a 2-1 return on its investment in the EDC. Their choice to redirect economic development funds duplicates the efforts of the EDC while receiving a "free lunch" the EDC provides from its successes. County Supervisors represent all residents of the County, not just those residing in the unincorporated areas. They should recognize, as we do, that we all benefit from every job that is created regardless of the location.

We applaud Supervisor Pete Vander Poel for his desire to remain unified and work collaboratively in creating jobs for our residents. We can only hope that the other Supervisors reconsider their choice to not support the nationally recognized successes of the Tulare County EDC. Let's work together as a County, cities and private sector to further economic development and make Tulare County a better place to live for everyone.

Helen Keller said, "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much." The EDC Board of Directors remains committed to working together, as public and private sectors, to put our priority of "jobs first" for residents ahead of individual personality and politics.

2012-14 Administrative Board

- Nick Seals, Chairman
- Craig Vejvoda, Vice Chairman
- Teresa Boyce, Secretary
- George Vasquez, Member

EDC Past Chairs

- Suzi Picaso, Past Chair, 2010-12
- Colby Wells, Treasurer & Past Chair, 2008-10
- Harroll Wiley, Past Chair, 2002-06

Libertarians

Continued from p. 1

perspective on water supply. The members of the panel are: Brian Holtz, member of the Purissima Hills Water District in Los Altos Hills; Jim Hoerricks, member of the West Valley Water District in Los Angeles County; and Jonathan Hall, member of the Tehachapi-Cummings Water District Board of Directors.

Richard Winger, a well-known expert on election law, will then talk about how California's Top Two Primary Elections law has affected the Libertarian Party and what is being done on both the legal and legislative sides of the issue. Since 1985, Winger has published Ballot Access News, a highly respected monthly newsletter devoted to election law nationwide. *Ballot Access News* is also published online at www.ballot-access.org.

The guest speaker for the Saturday evening banquet will be Bill Schuffenhauer, Olympic Silver Medalist and three-time Olympian, who will speak about his perseverance and triumph. Following his retirement from the Olympics, Schuffenhauer became the president and CEO of Silver Retreats, a company that focuses on group- and team-building retreats for companies and executives. He also serves on the board of directors for Love Of Life Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit charity that supports and advocates for people affected by cancer and other illnesses.

A panel of Libertarian elected officials will close out the convention on Sunday.

More information about event pricing and registration can be found at www.ca.lp.org or by calling 916-446-1776. Tickets can be purchased individually or by package.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SEND YOUR LETTERS TO: editor@ourvalleyvoice.com

Re: Two for the Road

Mr. Oldenbourg,

I have always enjoyed reading the *Valley Voice* in the past, it always had excellent articles on not only the history of the Valley, but it also kept up with the current news. Since the *Valley Voice* got a second chance at life, I have noticed that a certain view or opinion seems to be pushed. I just read the article regarding the raffle of handguns by acting Sheriff Mike Boudreaux, it became very clear that you are not a fan of Mr. Boudreaux, or of handguns. While I do not know Mr. Boudreaux, I do have family and friends in Law Enforcement that feel he is doing a good job as acting Sheriff and will do a good job as Sheriff.

Now about your rant on people having handguns and you not feeling safe. The world is not a safe place and is getting less safe every day. While I will agree that not everyone should have a handgun, or carry a handgun, I do not agree in the (gun buy back program). This is just one more way for our rights to be stripped away by people who think they are smarter than the rest of us, and that we are not capable of having a weapon without it making us do something bad; as if the gun has the ability to make us evil. We both know this is nonsense.

I am glad that we live in a place where we have the right to buy a gun or to win one in a raffle. I will do what I can do keep that right. It seems that telling people what they should and should not do is becoming very popular with liberals todays, and that is sad. Have you ever tried to educate yourself on guns or have you even fired a weapon? Probably not. That's another great thing about the U.S., we all have the right to our opinion, and that is do to our founding fathers and the brave men and women who guarantee that right by standing watch, people like Mr. Boudreaux. Oh, and they all did it while carrying a gun.

David B.

Editor's response: *I never said I do not feel safe. I feel so safe that I don't carry a gun.*

Mr. Oldenbourg,

Just read From the Publisher's Desk column in the March 6th edition of the *Valley Voice*.

Just want you to know that I support Sheriff Boudreaux and will vote for him. The very fact that he had a gun raffle shows that he is in touch with the citizens of Tulare County, except maybe for you. (Are you a native of Tulare County? I am.)

We need MORE guns in society and more people carrying them. That's the only way to have any measure of security from criminals and also as a prevention against governement going bad.

So, Mr. Oldenbourg, you are entitled to your opinion and to publish it and you now at least have my feedback disagreeing with it.

Jess King
Lindsay

Editor's response: *What does it matter if I'm a native of Tulare County or not?*

FACEBOOK RESPONSE to NATIONAL PARK/AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS

"Just read the February 20 *Valley Voice*. I am very concerned about the article "Local National Park Plan to Restore Aquatic Ecosystems"...
Show me the science that the Yellow Legged frog is endangered; there is no science, as this is another move by the Park Service to push Agenda 21 and keep the users out of the National Parks.
This is the same science that was used for the bogus Spotted Owl that destroyed logging in the local forests."

— John Keyes

UPDATE

Freedom Celebration Moved Back to July 4

In deference to the competing events on July 3, including events at the ballpark, the Foundation Board voted to hold the Freedom Celebration on the traditional date of July 4.

The fireworks program has been altered for safety reasons and will be even more spectacular from inside Giant Chevrolet Cadillac Mineral King Stadium; however, it will be less visible to surrounding areas.

The program, which starts at 7pm, will feature the return of local favorite Run 4 Cover, and, of course, culminate in a fireworks spectacular. Concessions will be provided by several vendors. Gates open at 6:30pm.

The event will be free to the public but a donation of $3 a person is requested to help defray costs. As in the past, the board is also requesting donations from potential sponsors.

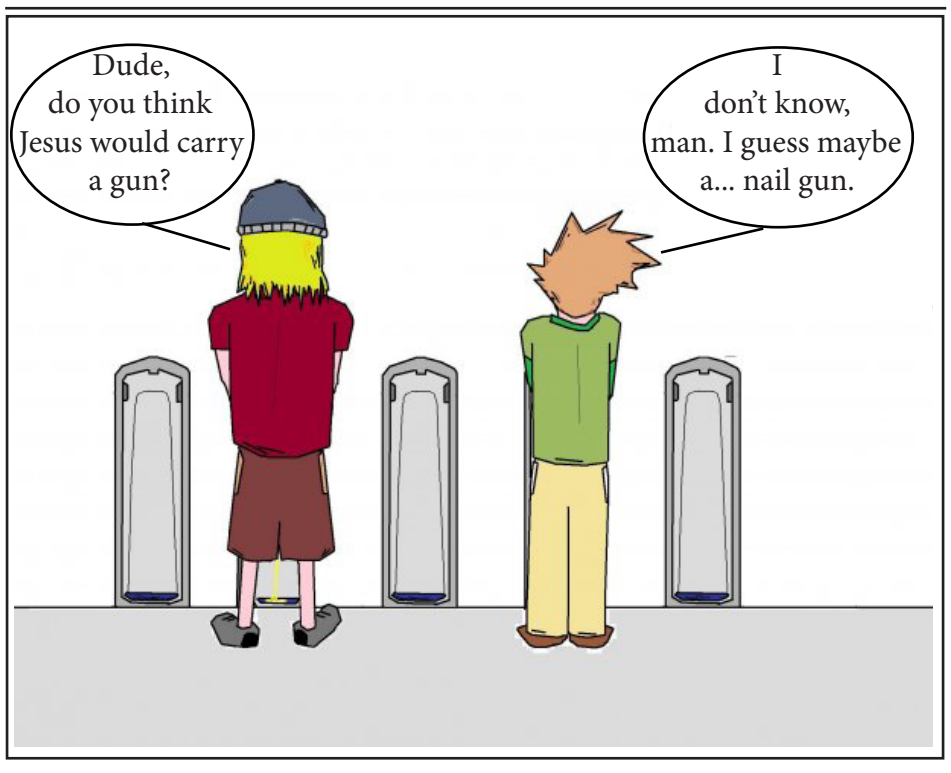
This will be the last year the foundation will sponsor the Freedom Celebration as the scope of the event has outgrown the group's limited manpower resources. The foundation is actively seeking organizations willing to take over this popular community event.

If your organization or company has an interest in taking over the event, call Carol Hoppert Hays at 713-4599.

USE YOUR VOICE
READ ARTICLES, COMMENT ONLINE AND SUBMIT LETTERS AT OURVALLEYVOICE.COM

Black Tie

ALEX OLDENBOURG



READER RESPONSE to LETTER: HOMELESS & PROPERTY RIGHTS

"what you don't realise is that you said it yourself they dont follow rules. they will continue to camp out on others property regardless of any rules. its already illigal. its called tresspassing but we do it anyways. people have miles of woods in these farming fields where i live. when i camp out there i use a sleeping bag and tent. and leave nothing but a fire pit and some ashes. plus were all humans. have some sympathy being homeless is hell. i can tell you have little knowledge on the subject."

— Ruth

An Early College High School

CRAIG WHEATON, VUSD SUPERINTENDENT

Do you want your son or daughter to not only receive a high school diploma but also complete 25 or 30 college units while in high school? If so, Visalia Technical Early College High School (VTEC) might be for you!

Visalia Unified Superintendent Craig Wheaton

VTEC is in its fourth year as a Visalia Unified charter school. It began as an innovative experiment to accelerate students toward college and career success. Since then, it has exceeded our expectations and is recognized by the California School Board Association as a "Golden Bell Award" winner.

What began as one sophomore class in a couple of portables on the COS Ag Farm has evolved into a highly successful technical and early college prep school that last year graduated its first senior class. For those seniors, many of whom started as "at-risk students," consider their success:

- VTEC had a 98% graduation rate
- 100% of those graduating did so with post-secondary credit
- 55% of those students accumulated 24 credits or more at COS, with the top student earning 49 credits (at $49 per unit that is a college savings of over $2,200!)

VTEC has developed a highly supportive environment for student academic success. The VTEC staff makes sure kids learn; and this has increased the pass rate for all classes, resulting in high attendance rates and a very high graduation rate. VTEC teachers just don't accept unfinished work or failure – students are re-taught and supported until they are able to successfully learn the course work.

There are many unique things about VTEC. First of all, all students choose a "career pathway" and their course work is wrapped around that career. Next year, students will have the option of three career pathways: Veterinary Science, Food Science and Agricultural Technology. Students work on real projects and have opportunities to interact with professionals in their career field.

Additionally, we have pioneered and forged a strong partnership with College of the Sequoias and have created a strong and highly supportive industry advisory board. They represent a broad business spectrum from industry partners, the Carpenters Union, Visalia Chamber of Commerce, the Tulare County Farm Bureau and the Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County.

Visalia Unified purchased and renovated the 35-acre property formerly used as the COS Ag Farm. It converted it into a state-of-the-art high school with a strong technology emphasis – updated wireless access, a brand new computer lab loaded with career technical software, and 1:1 computer access in each of the classrooms. Also, each senior is issued his or her own iPad for use in both high school and college courses during the year.

If this sounds like a place for you, applications and information on fall enrollment are available by contacting Principal Victoria Porter at 622-3212 or vporter@vusd.org.

Craig Wheaton, Ed.D., is superintendent of the Visalia Unified School District.

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Further details may be easily obtained by calling the phone number listed above and asking for the Easy As 1, 2, 3 Operator.

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Scheduled to speak at the Tulare Sci-Fi Con are (l-r): C. Andrew Nelson, Erin Fitzgerald, George McArthur, Ethan Dettenmaier

First-Ever Tulare Sci-Fi Con Planned for March 29

STEVE PASTIS

The Twin Suns, in association with the Tulare Library Foundation, will present Tulare Sci-Fi Con at the International AgriCenter, 4500 S. Laspina St., Tulare, from 10am to 6pm on Saturday, March 29. The event is a fundraiser to benefit the Tulare Library Children's Section.

The science fiction convention is believed to be the first of its kind in Tulare County.

"It's the first one here that I'm aware of," said Derek Mazer, exhibits director for the event. "There used to be something like this at the Visalia Mall, but this is the first actual convention."

What is the difference between a science fiction convention and a comic book convention?

"They're the same," Mazer explained. "Basically, we didn't want to use the same term – comic-con. We just came up with a name that was wasn't being used."

Mazer has attended all the big science fiction and/or comic book conventions in California and incorporated that experience into the Tulare Sci-Fi Con. "I looked at all the big conventions and took all their policies, rules and the way they run things, and tried to remodel that for my own use," he said.

The convention will feature a main stage with performances by the Saber Guild, a Star Wars choreography group based in Los Angeles, as well as a costume contest. Exhibitors are expected to include those involved in SteamPunk, which is defined by Wikipedia as "a subgenre of science fiction that typically features steam-powered machinery, especially in a setting inspired by industrialized Western civilization during the 19th century." Anime, horror, books, baseball cards and antiques should also be represented. Authors and artists will be in attendance to sell their work.

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Aaron Lewis to Perform Country Music March 27 at the Visalia Fox

"Life is circular. Country just came back to me. It's like the acoustic thing. I did that before the band [Staind]. This is full circle because this was the first music I was ever exposed to as a child."

– Aaron Lewis

Aaron Lewis

If you want to get to know Aaron Lewis, who headlines the Visalia Fox Theatre on Thursday, March 27, just listen to his first full-length album, The Road. On that album, the Grammy Award-nominated, multi-platinum singer, songwriter and guitarist tells one story after another. Echoing traditional country, some of those tales are hilarious and heartwarming, while others are pensive and personal.

For Lewis, The Road continues to unwind and surprise like it always has.

In 2011, the Staind frontman formally arrived in the country world with the release of his debut EP, Town Line. Highlighted by the success of gold-selling single "Country Boy," featuring the legendary George Jones and Charlie Daniels, the seven-song EP reached #1 on the Billboard Country Albums Chart and #7 on the Billboard Top 200.

Lewis also received two Academy of Country Music nominations for "Vocal Event of the Year" for "Country Boy" (for his work as artist and as co-producer) as well as two CMT nominations – one for "USA Weekend Breakthrough Video of the Year" and another for "Collaborative Video of the Year."

After a whirlwind year, Lewis began working on what would become The Road in the fall of 2011. In many ways, that album brings things full circle for Lewis. In Staind, he made his mark on hard rock. The group sold 13 million albums worldwide, yielding four consecutive top 3 debuts on the Billboard Top 200, as well as numerous radio hits. Their single "It's Been Awhile" also remains the most-played rock song of the decade.

Still, this new chapter proves cyclical for Lewis, actually bringing him back to the first style of music he'd heard – country music.

Tickets for the 7:30pm concert are $29-$69. For tickets or more information, visit the Visalia Fox box office, call 625-1369 or visit www.foxvisalia.org.

Three Rivers Artists Prepare for Studio Tour Eleven

STAFF REPORTS

Three Rivers Artists' Studio Tour Eleven is a self-guided, biennial studio tour event scheduled for March 21-23, from 10am-5pm each day. Starting at the Three Rivers Historical Museum on Highway 198, visitors will be given a descriptive guidebook and map to find the studios tucked in the rolling foothills of the small town.

Visitors will meet artists in their actual workspaces, seeing how their art is made along with the art itself, especially all the new work created over the two-year cycle since the last studio tour.

Martha Widmann paints what she calls "slow art."

All of the artists preparing for Three Rivers Artists' Studio Tour Eleven describe their art studios as places of sustenance and incubation for bringing their artwork to life.

- Jana Botkin has two studio spaces, a small cabin where she has been making detailed, intricate pencil drawings for a new book on the cabins of Wilsonia (a private enclave near Grant Grove). Her large garage/shed is her oil painting space, where she paints the local landscape of mountain, river and valley.
- Rick Badgley makes fine handcrafted furniture in his underground workshop, where he will showcase samples of his functional chairs, tables and cabinets.
- Anne Birkholz makes bowls (and much more) from wood scraps she finds in unlikely places, and from some that friends drop at her door. She uses a lathe to turn the wood chunks, with sawdust and wood chips flying, uncovering distinctive works of art.
- Mona Selph paints stunning landscapes on large canvasses that express her emotional connections to mountain, desert and sky. She built her studio for extensive exploration

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Creedence Clearwater Revisited

Creedence Clearwater Revisited Returns to Play Eagle Mountain

STEVE PASTIS

Creedence Clearwater Revisited, a project started by bass player Stu Cook and drummer Doug Clifford of the legendary group Creedence Clearwater Revival, will headline Eagle Mountain Casino on March 29 at 8pm.

Creedence Clearwater Revisited began in 1995 when Clifford invited Cook to spend a week at his home in Lake Tahoe, and possibly reconsider his plans to live in L.A.

"We were jamming in my studio with bass and drums," Clifford told the Voice. "It got very boring actually. We decided we missed playing in a band. We hadn't played the (Creedence Clearwater Revival) songs in 30-odd years and we missed playing them."

Clifford and Cook decided to put a band together and perform their old hits at two shows. They continued playing because "we were received so well."

They quickly learned to only play the old songs.

"If we would come out and play new music, we'd lose our audience," said Clifford. "Our show consists of 21 songs and they're all hits. If we threw in an album cut here or there, people would go to take a leak or buy a beer."

It's unfortunate that Creedence Clearwater Revisited doesn't play the old album cuts. There is a song called "Porterville," written by John Fogerty, that never quite became a hit, but which would have been appropriate for their local show.

"I'm not sure that John Fogerty had ever been there when he wrote it," said Clifford. "That was almost

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ZZ Top

ZZ Top Sells Out April 2nd Show at Visalia Fox

STAFF REPORTS

Rock and Roll Hall of Fame members ZZ Top will headline a sold-out concert at the Visalia Fox Theatre on April 2.

ZZ Top lays claim to being the longest-running major rock band with its original personnel intact. Of course, there are only three of them – Billy F. Gibbons, Dusty Hill and Frank Beard – but it's notable that they're still together after more than 40 years of rock, blues and boogie on the road and in the studio.

It was in Houston in the waning days of 1969 that ZZ Top coalesced from the core of two rival bands, Billy's Moving Sidewalks and Frank and Dusty's American Blues. The new group went on to record the eponymous ZZ Top's First Album and Rio Grande Mud that reflected its strong blues roots. The band's third album, 1973's Tres Hombres, catapulted them to national attention with the hit "La Grange," still one of the band's signature pieces today. The next hit was "Tush," a song that was featured on the Fandango! album released in 1975.

Following a lengthy hiatus during which the individual members of the band traveled the world, they switched labels and returned with two provocative albums, Deguello and El Loco. The next release, Eliminator, was something of a paradigm shift for ZZ Top. Their roots blues skew was intact, but added to the mix were tech-age trappings that soon found a visual outlet with the nascent MTV. Suddenly, the three members were video icons, playing a kind of Greek chorus in videos that highlighted the album's three smash singles: "Gimme All Your Lovin'," "Sharp Dressed Man" and "Legs."

ZZ Top has performed before millions of fans throughout North America, as well as overseas from Slovenia to Italy, from Australia to Sweden, from Russia to Japan and most points in between. The band's iconography – beards, cars, girls and the magic keychain – seems to transcend all bounds of geography and language.

Comedian Ralphie May Returns to Visalia Fox Theatre

Perico Productions will present "Ralphie May: Too Big to Ignore" at the Visalia Fox Theatre on Saturday, March 22.

May's first television appearance was on season one of "Last Comic Standing," and he has since starred in three Comedy Central specials. He also served as a host of the network's "Live at Gotham" show. His television appearances also include "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno," "Jimmy Kimmel Live," "The Late Late Show with Craig Kilborn," "The Man Show," MTV's "Bash" and NBC's "Whoopie," and he was a writer and producer on ESPN's "Mohr Sports."

When not on the road, May contributes his time and energy to helping others. Since establishing a residence in Nashville, he has been actively involved with the 100 Club of Nashville, various youth organizations and the Humane Society.

Ralphie May

Joining May will be comedian Lahna Turner, known for blending stand-up with original comedy songs.

Tickets for the 8pm show – $25 for general and $30 for reserved seating – can be purchased at the Visalia Fox Theatre Box Office or at www.ticketfly.com.

Derek and David Carr to Speak at Big Man's Breakfast on April 5

Iron Men's Ministry's Big Man's Breakfast will be held at the International Ag Center's Dairy Pavilion in Tulare, on Saturday, April 5, from 8-11:30am. The event, "The Biggest Men's Breakfast in the State for the Best God in the World," is a celebration of non-denominational Christian brotherhood with more than 25 local churches joining with Iron Men-affiliated churches from throughout the state.

The fast-paced men and boys' event will feature Fresno State's football legends Derek and David Carr. Derek led the Bulldogs into the national spotlight with an 11-1 record and a Top-25 BCS ranking in each of the eight FCS polls. In 12 games, Carr amassed an FBS-best 4,866 yards and 48 touchdowns, while completing over 70 percent of his passes. He led his team to the Mountain West Championship, and was named offensive player of the game in which he passed for more than 400 yards for the eighth time in 2013.

David Carr was the first overall pick of the 2002 NFL Draft. In his senior season, Fresno State beat Colorado, Oregon State and Wisconsin, all members of the BCS division – something unprecedented for a mid-major team. The Bulldogs climbed to as high as number eight in the national polls, and David was on the cover of Sports Illustrated. During his professional career, he played for the Houston Texans, Carolina Panthers, New York Giants, San Francisco 49ers and the New York Giants, where he received a Super Bowl ring after the 2011 season.

The story of Iron Men Ministries, from its beginnings in Visalia, is its growth and community impact statewide. Under founder John Lloyd of The Road Church, the discipleship-focused men's ministry has exploded in the Central Valley as well as a host of churches in Northern and Southern California, and is starting in New York and other states.

The event features "tons of MAN food," autograph opportunities, booths, displays and raffles. For tickets, visit www.ironmensministry.com. For additional information, contact Brandon Hall at brandon@ironmensministry.com, and for booth and sponsorship information, contact Nick Anthony at nick@ironmensministry.com.

CASA to Host Blue Ribbon Campaign and 'Once Upon a Dream'

CASA is hosting two events to bring attention to and help the 1,500 children in Tulare County who are in the juvenile court dependency system, all victims of abuse or neglect.

The mission of CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) is to speak up for the innocent children who are victims of abuse and neglect, advocating for their safety and well-being by training community volunteers to represent their best interests and be their voice in court.

April is National Child Abuse Prevention and Awareness Month. CASA of Tulare County, the Child Abuse Prevention Council and the Tulare County District Attorney's Office will kick off the 19th Annual Blue Ribbon Campaign with a March on Main Street on Saturday, April 5, at 9am.

Participants will gather at Center and Floral streets and march down Main Street to Garden Street Plaza where there will be face painting and fun events for kids, a drum circle, Ballet Folkforico, information booths and remarks by Judge Juliet Boccone, District Attorney Tim Ward and others.

Blue ribbons, which show support and draw attention to the tragedy of child abuse and neglect, will be given out at the event.

CASA will also host "Once Upon a Dream," its 20th Annual Gala Dinner and Auction – which is moving to the Visalia Convention Center this year – on Friday, May 16, at 6:30pm. The dinner will be prepared by the Vintage Press, and dancing will be to the music of Borrowed Time. Live and silent auctions will include a vehicle drawing from Ed Dena's Auto Center, a St. Louis trip for four that includes a four-night stay and box seats to a St. Louis Cardinals' three-game series, Tulare County Symphony season tickets with dinners, and many other items.

For reservations, call 625-4007. For more information, visit www.casatulareco.org.

Saintseneca

Sound N Vision to Present Shows by Saintseneca, Mezcal

With a new record, Dark Arc, to be released on the ANTI- label next month, and a live show that built a national fan base, Columbus, Ohio's Saintseneca comes to the Cellar Door in downtown Visalia on Friday, March 28, with quite the buzz. The group's diverse assemblage of influences, poetic lyricism and folk instrumentation is consistently enhanced by elements of pop, post-punk and psychedelia.

Visalia's own The Gospel Whiskey Runners are set to open the night. The group has become the area's best-drawing local acoustic-based folk/rock band.

Tickets for the 9:30pm 21+ show are $7 and available at ticketweb.com.

On Friday, April 4, Sound N Vision will present a double headline-worthy bill, when two long-time Central Valley giants unite. Fresno-raised A.C. Myles and Visalia's Mezcal join forces at the Cellar Door.

Mezcal plays world music, pop, rock, funk and soul. With two female singers sharing vocal duties with band leader Carlos Rodriguez, the depth of the band's material is almost infinite. Flashy lead guitars, keys, horns and multiple percussionists fill out a sound that always keeps the crowd dancing.

A. C. Myles has a new spring record release titled "Reconsider Me" -- a title that gels with his long-awaited return to Cellar Door, as he asks his long-time fan base to reconsider him after a long break from Visalia shows due to his busy national tour schedule. Myles is a blues purist who grew up in the Central Valley and has followed his guitar around the nation his entire young adult life, making friends and building music community along the way.

Tickets for the 9:30pm 21+ show are $10 and available at ticketweb.com.

Mamma Mia! 'ABBA Mania' to Take the Stage at Visalia Fox Theatre

The world's top touring ABBA tribute show will take the stage at the Visalia Fox Theatre on Sunday, April 6.

ABBA Mania formed in 1999, and the show has been selling out theatres and concert halls internationally ever since. The show has toured the world, bringing the music of the Swedish supergroup to its millions of fans in France, Denmark, Belgium, Spain, South Africa, New Zealand, Singapore, Australia, South Korea, the UK and across the U.S.

Agnetha, Bjorn, Benny and Anni-Frid, collectively known as ABBA, dominated the charts for nearly ten years and enjoyed nine number 1 hits. With hits such as "Dancing Queen," "Waterloo," "Mamma Mia," "The Winner Takes it All," "Fernando" and "Take A Chance On Me," they became Sweden's highest export earners – even outselling Volvo cars.

The show, which features two hours of uplifting, dance-inducing and sometimes heartbreaking songs, faithfully and respectfully recreates ABBA's sound not only for lifelong, diehard ABBA fans but a new generation who never had the opportunity to see ABBA live.

The stars of Abba Mania

Tickets for the 7:30pm concert are $29-$45. For tickets or more information, visit the Visalia Fox box office, call 625-1369 or visit www.foxvisalia.org.

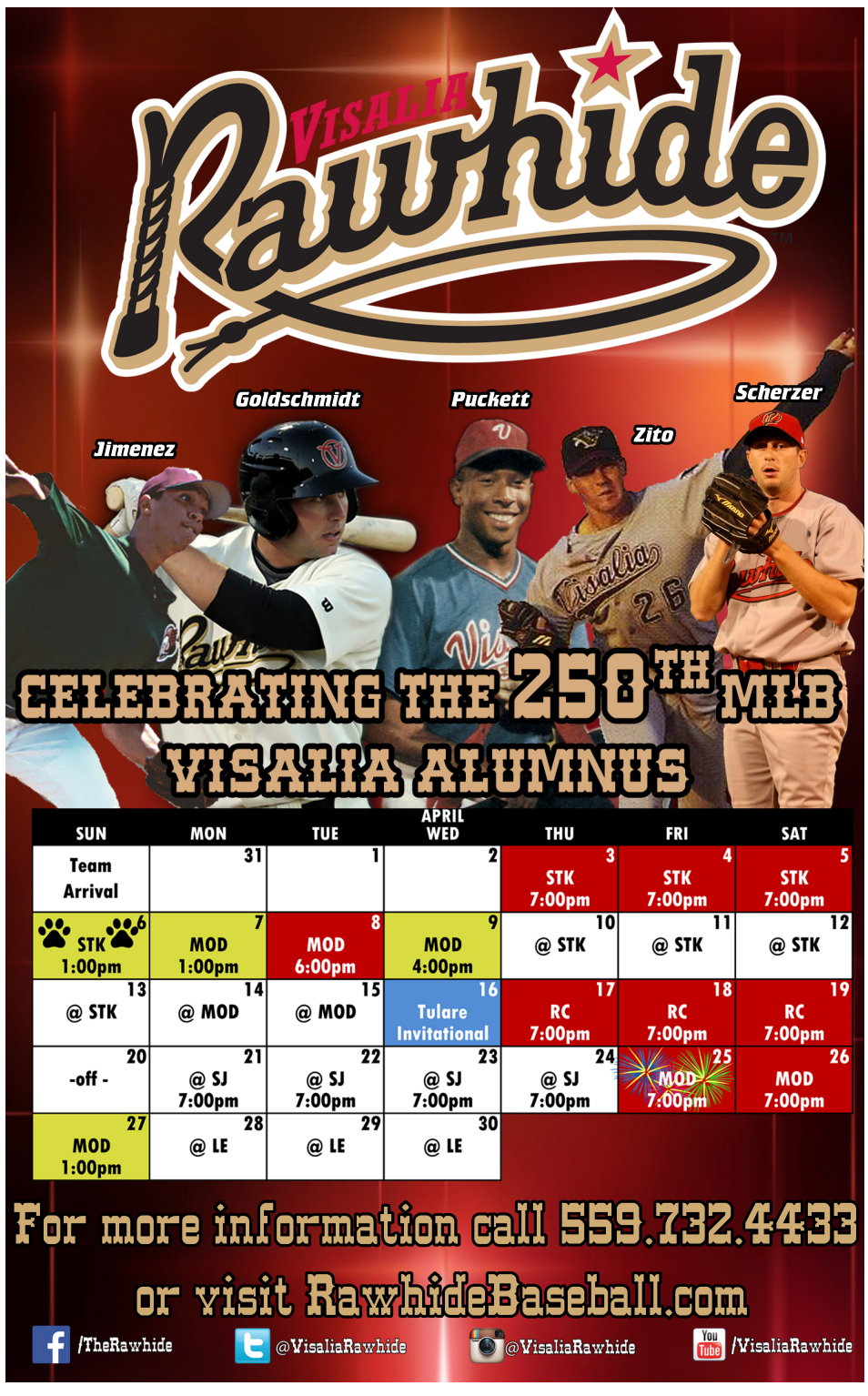
Porterville Breakfast Lions Host Spring Kids Fest

Wristbands are now on sale for the 7th Annual Spring Kids Fest presented by the Porterville Breakfast Lions. The community is invited to Veterans Park from 12-3:30pm on March 29 for an afternoon of fun and entertainment.

The 2014 Kids Fest will have more attractions than ever before, including a 100-foot giant slide, carnival rides, rock-climbing wall, numerous bounce houses, obstacle course, toddler play area, trackless train rides, games, food, local performers and other surprises. There will also be a performance at 2pm by the E & M Reptile Family.

The event is designed for children ages 2-12. Admission to the park is free; however, children must have a wristband to participate in the activities.

For more information, call the Heritage Center at 791-7695 or visit www.ci.porterville.ca.us.



MUSIC

March 20 – 3's A Crowd – 7-10pm
On Thursdays, 3's A Crowd performs at Crawdaddys Visalia, 333 E. Main St. For information, visit CrawdaddysVisalia.com.

March 20 – Boyz II Men – 7:30pm
Boyz II Men will perform in concert at Tachi Palace in Lemoore. Tickets are $40, $55 and $85. For information, visit tachipalace.com.

March 20 – The Backroad Band–8-10pm
The Backroad Band will be perform classic rock and oldies at a Spring Party at the Farmer's Fury Tasting Room, 358 West D Street, in Lemoore. For information, visit farmersfurywines.com.

March 21 – John Pemberton – 8-10pm
John Pemberton, a country music performer, will appear at Farmer's Fury Tasting Room, 358 West D Street, in Lemoore. For information, visit farmersfurywines.com.

March 21 – Lost in the Trees with Special Guests – 9pm-12am
Lost in the Trees will perform with special guests at the Cellar Door in Visalia. This event is for ages 21 and over. Cover charge is $10. For information, visit cellardoor101.com.

March 22 – Lindsay Guitar Honor Ensemble – 7pm
The Lindsay Guitar Honor Ensemble will perform at the Lindsay Museum and Gallery, 165 N. Gale Hill. This will be the group's last concert before graduation. Reception with wine and hors d'oeuvres. Tickets are $15.

March 22 – Wikidstyle – 8-10pm
Wikidstyle will appear at Fury Tasting Room, 358 West D Street, in Lemoore. For information, visit farmersfurywines.com.

March 26 – David Lasswell and the Rounders – 7-10pm
On Wednesdays, its KJUG Country Music night and David Lasswell and the Rounders at Crawdaddys Visalia, 333 E. Main St. For information, visit CrawdaddysVisalia.com.

March 27 – Aaron Lewis – 7:30pm
Aaron Lewis, Grammy Award-nominated, multi-platinum singer, songwriter and guitarist, returns to the Visalia Fox Theatre. Tickets are $29, $39, $49, $69. Tickets and information available at foxvisalia.org.

March 28 – Saintseneca and the Gospel Whiskey Runners – 9:30pm-12:30am
Saintseneca and The Gospel Whiskey Runners are slated to perform at the Cellar Door in Visalia. Cover is $7 for 21 and over. For information, visit cellardoor101.com.

March 29 – Creedence Clearwater Revisited – 8pm
The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame rhythm section of Stu Cook and Doug "Cosmo" Clifford from the legendary group Creedence Clearwater Revival launched the Creedence Clearwater Revisited project in 1995 to once again perform live Creedence Clearwater Revival hits. This duo and their band will perform at Eagle Mountain Casino. Tickets start at $30. For information, visit eaglemtncasino.com.

March 29 – David Trent – 8-10pm
David Trent will appear at Farmer's Fury Tasting Room, 358 West D Street, in Lemoore. For information, visit farmersfurywines.com.

April

April 2 – ZZ Top
ZZ Top will be at the Fox Theatre in Visalia. Tickets are sold out.

April 4 – '70s and Beyond Concert – 5 & 7:30pm
As part of the Porterville College's Cultural Historical Awareness Program, a '70s and Beyond Concert will be held at PC Theater. For information, visit www.portervillecollege.edu/CHAP.

April 4 – Isla View – 8-10pm
Isla View will appear at Farmer's Fury Tasting Room, 358 West D Street, in Lemoore. For information, visit farmersfurywines.com.

April 5 – Terra Bella – 7pm
Terra Bella with special guests David Lasswell and Mehrten Drive will perform at the Visalia Fox Theatre. Tickets and information available at foxvisalia.org.

April 5 – Christy Turpin – 8-10pm
Christy Turpin will appear at Farmer's Fury Tasting Room, 358 West D Street, in Lemoore. For information, visit farmersfurywines.com.

April 6 – Abba Mania – 7:30pm
The ABBA tribute concert will come to Visalia Fox Theatre. The show has sold out theaters and concert halls internationally since its debut in 1999. Tickets–$29-$45–available by calling 625-1369 or visiting www.foxvisalia.org.

April 11-13 – 41st Annual Jazzaffair
The Sierra Traditional Jazz Club of Three Rivers will hold the 41st Annual Jazzaffair at the Lions Arena. Hot jazz, food booths and four performance venues are featured. Free shuttles will also be available. Bands include High Sierra Jazz Band Host Band, Au Brothers / Howard Miyata, Bob Draga, Cornet Chop Suey, High Street Band, Ivory and Gold, Jerry Krahn, Night Blooming Jazzmen, Reedley River Rats, Titan Hot Seven, Tom Rigney and Flambeau and Wally's Warehouse Waifs. A 3-day, all events badge is available for $95. Day badges are also available. For information, visit jazzaffair.info.

April 11 – Marble Fork Band – 6:30-8:30pm
The Marble Fork Band performs at Cafe 210 on the second Friday of each month. The ensemble offers original music featuring a Chapman Stick 10 string instrument, acoustic guitar and percussion. Cafe 210 is located at 210 W. Center, Visalia. For information, 210life.com.

April 15 – The Great Guitars – 7:30pm
Budweiser Concert Series and the Visalia Fox Theatre present The Great Guitars featuring Martin Taylor, Frank Vignola, Vinny Raniola

EVENTS

March 21 – Leadership Visalia 6th Annual Golf Tournament – 10:30am
The Visalia Chamber of Commerce will host a tournament at Valley Oaks Golf Course. Golf individually or sign up as a team, participate as a Leadership or a tee sponsor to benefit future leaders in Visalia's business community. Tickets are almost sold out. Call Mike Cox, 734-5876, for information.

March 21 – Lemoore Youth Golf Tournament – 12:30pm
Lemoore Parks & Recreation will hold a golf fundraiser for the youth programs of the community. The $55 entry fee includes a green fee and cart, barbecue dinner, tea package and range balls. To register, call the Lemoore Golf Course, 924-9498, or Lemoore Parks & Recreation, 924-6767.

March 22-23 – Society for California Archaeology Annual Meeting
The 2014 SCA 48th Annual Meeting will be held at the Visalia Convention Center. For information, visit scahome.org/2014-annual-meeting.

March 22 – Community Coffee with Congressman Valadao – 9-10am
Congressman David G. Valadao will discuss local issues and give a brief legislative update at the Lemoore Senior Center. For information, contact Justin Mendes at justin.mendes@mail.house.gov, or 381-2170.

March 22 – Field Trip to Native Plant Demonstration Garden – 9am-1:30pm
Cathy Capone, the owner of Cal Natives Demonstration Garden, in Porterville, and California Native Plant Society offer a Field Trip Program at 806 W. Westfield Ave., Porterville. CNPS field trips are free and everyone is welcome to visit the native plant demonstration garden and take advantage of the first days of spring. Lemonade will be provided. Call 361-9164 for information.

March 22 – 21st Annual Auction & Dinner – 5pm
Tulare/Kings Counties Youth For Christ will hold its annual auction and dinner at Central Valley Christian School Gymnasium, 5600 W. Tulare St., Visalia. The free event will be catered by the "Taste of Visalia," featuring foods from Cafe 225, Fugazzis, Rosa's Italian Steakhouse, Double LL Steakhouse, Little Italy, The Vintage Press, Olive Gardens, Bravo Farms and Edible Arrangements. Free tickets available by calling 732-5677.

March 22 – Help Save the Tulare County Fair
Friends of the Tulare County Fair Foundation is calling for financial support to save the fair. Guest speaker Dr. Scott Vernon and dancing to music by Branded Heart are featured. Sponsorships are available. Tickets are $100 per person or $1,000 for a reserved table for 10. For tickets and sponsorship information, call 686-4707 or send an email to pamelafyock@tcfair.org.

March 25 – Challenge for Student Entrepreneurs – 8am-2pm
The 2013-2014 Southern California Gas Company Challenge for Student Entrepreneurs will be held at the Visalia Convention Center. Students from high schools in Kings, Tulare and other Central Valley counties will compete for cash and other prizes. Registration is required. For information, visit www.tcoe.org/challenge.

March 25 – Business After Hours – 5:30-7:30pm
Office Pride will host the Visalia Chamber of Commerce's Business After Hours networking event. Office Pride is located at 720 N Gateway St., Visalia. For information, visit visaliachamber.org.

March 26 – Double Luck: Memoirs of a Chinese Orphan – 11:30am-12:30pm
Author Lu Chi Fa (Gordon Lu) will give a multimedia presentation at Porterville College Theater. This is part of Porterville College's Cultural Historical Awareness Program (C.H.A.P.). This date is subject to change. For more information about C.H.AP. visit www.portervillecollege.edu/CHAP.

March 26 – Farmer's Fury Winery Ribbon Cutting and Grand Opening – 5-6pm
The Visalia Chamber of Commerce will welcome Farmer's Fury of Lemoore to the Chamber at the Rawhide Hall of Fame Club. For information, visit visaliachamber.org.

March 27, May 15, Sept. 18 – Essential Elements for the Future of the San Joaquin Valley
A private and public policy series will be presented by West Hills Community College District in a 3-part series. The series is to organize hands-on partnerships and create action steps for the future of the San Joaquin Valley while coping with climate change. It will be held at Harris Ranch Inn. Each session includes guest speakers and panel discussions. For information, call 934-2131.

March 28-30 – California Libertarian Party Convention
The California Libertarian Party will hold its 2014 State Convention in Visalia at the Holiday Inn Hotel and Conference Center. Guest speaker will be Bill Schuffenhauer, 2002 Olympic champion. Other events will include panels on water issues and free speech. The public is invited. For information on speakers, panels and registration go to www.ca.lp.org or call 916-446-1776.

March 29 – Hanford Garden Festival
UCCE Tulare/Kings Master Gardeners will have a display–Gardening 'Central Valley Style'–at the Hanford Garden Festival at the Hanford Mall. The displays will show how to grow different kinds of plants with an emphasis on water conservation, integrated pest management, and sustainable landscaping. For information, call 852-2735 on Thursdays from 9:30-11:30am.

March 29 – Hedlund FUNd Run – 8am-1pm
Central Valley Christian High School will hold a fundraiser with a variety of activities including a meter run for children ages 4

VENT CALENDAR

through 12, a 5K fun run, a zumba-thon, a basketball tournament, silent auction and a complimentary lunch. To register for any of the events visit, teamhedlund.org.

March 29 and April 12 – Fireline Safety for Hired Vendors - 8am-5pm
Fireline Safety for Hired Vendors will take place from 8am to 5pm in the PC Forum. Cost: $70 per person. The PC Fire Technology Department, the U.S. Forest Service and CAL FIRE will offer this one-day training that is required annually for operators of privately owned equipment used to respond to active wild land fires. Pre-registration/payment required. For more information on Community Education Classes, call 791-2492 or visit www.portervillecollege.edu/community_ed.

March 29 – Tulare & Kings County Teacher Recruitment Fair – 8:30am-1pm
Tulare and Kings Counties' School Districts are seeking applicants for grades K-12, Special Education and Bilingual K-12 positions who hold a valid teaching credential or will be eligible for a credential in the appropriate subject area by July 30. For information, visit tcoe.org/HR/TeacherRecruitmentFair.

March 29 – Tulare Sci-Fi Con – 10am-6pm
The Twin Suns Fan Club, in association with the Tulare Library Foundation will hold a Sci-Fi Con at the International Agri-Center in Tulare. Information, visit tularescificon.org.

March 31 – Affordable Care Act Open Enrollment Ends
The Open Enrollment period for the Affordable Care Act ends on March 31. Californians can sign up for insurance up until that date at CoveredCA.com.

March 31 – Deadline for Visalia Chamber Award Nominations
The 61st Annual Awards Celebration of the Visalia Chamber of Commerce will honor businesses and individuals who support the community. Nominations for man and woman of the year, emerging leaders, small, medium, large, agri-business and non-profit of the year must be received by March 31. For nomination forms, visit visaliachamber.org. For information, call 734-5876.

April

April 3 – Rawhide Opening Day
The Rawhide's first season home game will include special guests and activities. The park is located at 300 N. Giddings St., Visalia. For information, visit rawhidebaseball.com.

April 3 – Wine & Cheese Walk – 5:30-8:30pm
Downtown Visalians Business Development Committee will present a Wine & Cheese Walk. Pre-sale tickets are available for $35. To purchase tickets, call 732-7737. For information, visit downtownvisalia.com.

KIDS

March 20, 24-26–30th Annual Poetry & Prose
The Annual Poetry & Prose On Stage program will be held in the Tulare County Office of Education building located at 2637 W. Burrel in Visalia. This countywide oral interpretation event for students in grades K-8 provides an opportunity for participants to recite before an appreciative audience. The event is free. For information, call 733-6606.

March 21 – Secret of the Cardboard Rocket – 7pm
Peña Planetarium will have an evening presentation. The planetarium is located at 2500 W. Burrel Ave. (in the Educational Enrichment Center). Tickets are available at the planetarium office only between noon and 7pm on the day of the show. Tickets are $4 for adults and $3 for children under 12. For information, call 737-6334.

March 21 – Two Small Pieces of Glass: The Amazing Telescope – 8:15pm
Peña Planetarium will have an evening presentation. The planetarium is located at 2500 W. Burrel Ave. (in the Educational Enrichment Center). Tickets are available at the planetarium office only between noon and 7pm on the day of the show. Tickets are $4 for adults and $3 for children under 12. For information, call 737-6334.

March 22 – Science Explorers
Every Saturday, ImagineU Interactive Children's Museum offers special programs for young scientists. The museum is located at 700 E. Main St., Visalia. For information, visit imagineumuseum.org.

March 25 – National Agriculture Week Presentation
The winners of the Tulare County Farm Bureau annual calendar art contest will be announced at the Tulare County Board of Supervisors meeting. Winning entries from young artists will be printed in a full-color calendar to be distributed to schools throughout the county.

March 25 – Teen Game Night – 5pm
On the last Tuesday of each month, the Tulare Public Library hosts games for teens ages 13-19 in the Charter Room.

March 28 – Family Game Night – 5pm
On the last Friday of each month, the Tulare Public Library hosts games for families in the Charter Room. For information, visit the Tulare Public Library.

March 29 – 7th Annual Spring Kids Fest – 12-3:30pm
The 2014 Kids Fest will have more attractions than ever before, including a 100' giant slide, carnival rides, rock climbing wall, numerous bounce houses, obstacle course, toddler play area, trackless train rides, games, food, local performers, plus other fun surprises. This year's event is sponsored by the Porterville Breakfast Lions and will be held at Veterans Park, 1501 W. Henderson Ave., Porterville. For information, call the Heritage Center at 791-7695 or visit, ci.porterville.ca.us.

COMMUNITY

March 21 – Single Point Outsourcing Workshop: Supervisor Harassment Prevention – 9-11am
Single Point Outsourcing will hold a workshop at the Visalia Chamber of Commerce. For information, visit single-point.com.

March 22 – Exeter Optimist Club's Chocolate Romance Fundraiser.
The Optimist Club will hold its fundraiser in the Exeter Memorial Building. For information, call 592-3171.

March 22-23 – Reiki Workshop
A two-day intensive workshop on Reiki, a holistic form of healing that strengthens the "ki" energy and is sometimes referred to as laying-on of hands, will be offered at The Crystal Barn in Visalia. Reiki Master Heide Carmona will be the instructor. To register or for information, call 635-7749.

March 25 – Double Luck: Memoirs of a Chinese Orphan – 11:30am-12:30pm
Porterville College Cultural Historical Awareness Program will hold a multimedia presentation by author Lu Chi Fa (Gordon Lu) in the Porterville College Theater. For information, visit portervillecollege.edu/CHAP.

March 25 – Diabetic Diet, Part 1 – 12-12:30pm
Kaweah Delta's free Nutrition & You Series continues in the Blue Room of Kaweah Delta Medical Center, 400 W. Mineral King Ave., Visalia. For information, visit kaweahdelta.org.
March 26–Diabetic Diet Part 2 – 12-12:30pm
Kaweah Delta's free Nutrition & You Series continues in the Blue Room of Kaweah Delta Medical Center, 400 W. Mineral King Ave., Visalia. For information, visit kaweahdelta.org.

March 26 – Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group – 6-7:30pm
Marcy Johnson, Ph.D., from the Alzheimer's and Memory Center, will facilitate a support group at Quail Park Retirement Village. This group meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month. For information call 624-3503. Quail Park is located at 4520 W. Cypress Ave., Visalia.

March 27 – Diabetic Diet, Parts 1 & 2 – 6-7pm
Kaweah Delta's free Nutrition & You Series continues in the Blue Room of Kaweah Delta Medical Center, 400 W. Mineral King Ave., Visalia. For information, visit kaweahdelta.org.
March 27 – Last Thursday Book Club – 6pm
The Last Thursday Book Club will discuss "Scarlett" by Alexandra Ripley at the Tulare Public Library. For information, stop by the Tulare Public Library's research and information desk.

March 27 – Visalia Philatelic Society Auction – 6:15pm
Visalia Philatelic Society will meet at the Fellowship Hall of Grace Lutheran Church, 1111 S. Conyer Street. Doors open at 6:15 for bidders to examine auction items. The meeting begins at 7pm with the auction starting at 7:30pm. A raffle is held during each auction. For information, call 686-5067 or 734-6353.

March 27 – Exeter Friends of the NRA Annual Dinner
For information, call 309-8857.

March 27 – Happy Trails Riding Academy at the Visalia Library – 6:30pm
The third program in the Tulare County Library's "Getting to Know…" series will feature a presentation by the Happy Trails Riding Academy. This event is free. For information, call the Tulare County Library at 713-2703.

March 29 and April 12 – Fireline Safety for Hired Vendors – 8am-5pm
Porterville College will offer three one-day training sessions presented by the PC Fire Technology Department, the U.S. Forest Service and CAL FIRE. The session meets the annual requirement for operators of privately-owned equipment used to respond to active wild land fires. Pre-registration and payment, $70, required. For information on Community Education Classes call 791-2492 or visit www.portervillecollege.edu/community_ed.

March 29 – Sci/Fi Book Club – 1pm
"Genesis" by Bernard Beckett will be discussed. To register for book clubs or computer classes call 685-4503 or stop by the Tulare Public Library's research and information desk.

March 30 – Magic Penny Prosperity Workshop – 1-4pm
The Crystal Barn will offer a prosperity workshop. Registration is $35. A $5 deposit is required. The Crystal Barn is located at 1331 E. Noble Ave., Visalia. For information, visit thecrystalbarn.com.

April 1, 8. 22, 20 – Back Country Backpacking in the Sierra's – 7-9pm
College of the Sequoias will offer a Community Education class on preparing for backpacking in the Sierras, capped off by a 3-day weekend, May 2-4, in the Sierras to apply what you've learned. No skills are needed. Inexperienced and experienced welcomed. To register, visit cos.edu/communityed. The class is listed under Travel and Leisure. For registration questions, call Laurel Garver at 687-3201. For information, call instructor Dr. Lionvale at 733-7442.

April 4 – Exeter Garden Club Spring Tea
The annual event will be held at the Exeter Memorial Building. For information, call 592-2919.

April 5 – 19th Annual LifeWALK & Bazaar – 9am
Tulare-Kings Right to Life's LifeWALK & Bizaar will be held at Plaza Park in Visalia. Register at 8:30am for the two-mile walk at 9am. Enjoy music, food, bounce house, tricky-tray raffle and more. Grand prize is a cruise for two. Raise $150 and earn a T-shirt. For information, call 732-5000.

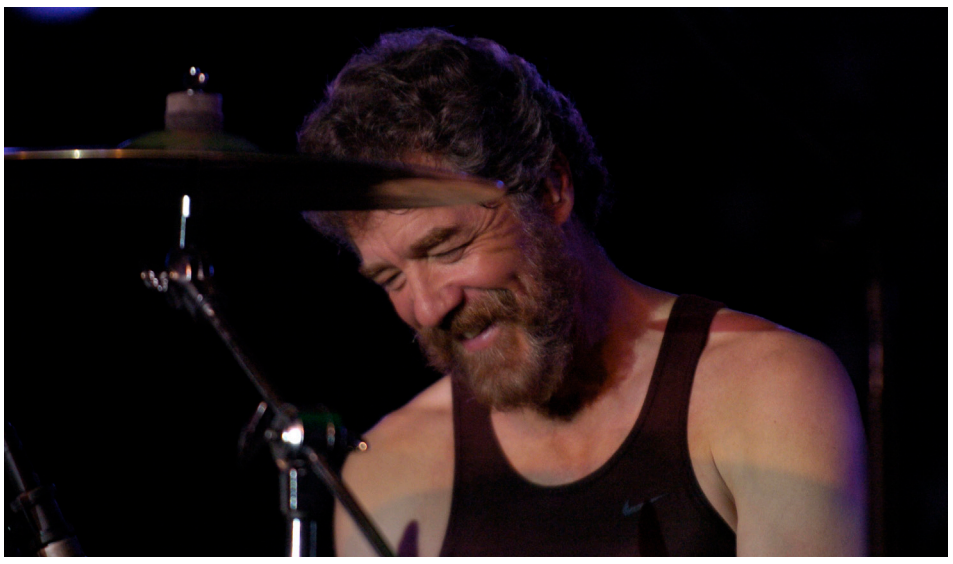
April 10 – Hands-On Heroes Awards
First 5 Tulare County will present honor heroes in five categories: health and wellness; behavioral health; early care and education; parent education; and exceptional volunteers. The awards will be presented at the Visalia Holiday Inn. For information, call 622-8650.

April 10 – Visalia Philatelic Society Auction – 6:15pm
Visalia Philatelic Society will meet at the Fellowship Hall of Grace Lutheran Church, 1111 S. Conyer St. For information, call 686-5067 or 734-6353.

April 11-14 – Lifeguard Certification Course
The Visalia Parks and Recreation Department will offer an American Red Cross certification program in lifeguarding, first air, and CPR/AED at the Anthony Community Center. Register online at liveandplayvisalia.com.

April 11 – Fast Forward Families: An Anthropology of the 21st Century – 7-8pm
Porterville College Cultural Historical Awareness Program will hold a multimedia presentation by Dr. Jan English-Lueck, associate dean, College of Social Sciences, San Jose State University in the College Theater. Information, visit portervillecollege.edu/CHAP.

April 11 – 55+ Rocks Monthly Speaker Series – 11:30am-12pm
The Visalia Senior Center presents "Avoiding Falls" as part of its continuing 55+ Rocks Monthly Speaker Series. The event is free, but reservations must be made in advance by calling 713-4481. Visalia Senior Center is located at 310 N. Locust.



Doug Clifford

Creedence

Continued from p. 17

50 years ago. It was a very small town then. The idea was about living in a small town and coming from there. I think he liked the sound of the name."

Clifford said his musical influences were rhythm and blues and early rock'n'roll singers such as Little Richard, Fats Domino and the Coasters. As a drummer, he was inspired by performers like Gene Krupa, Earl Palmer and especially Al Jackson, Jr., the drummer for Booker T. and the M.G.'s.

"We had a philosophical discussion about the drums," said Clifford about Jackson. "He really helped me more than any other performer."

The Beatles inspired Clifford and the others in Creedence Clearwater Revival, which was also a four-piece band with bass guitar, rhythm guitar, lead guitar and drums. The band – John Fogerty, Tom Fogerty, Cook and Clifford – signed with their first label in 1964.

"It gave us a renewed faith in what we were doing," Clifford recalled. "If anyone could come here and become famous playing rock'n'roll, why not us?"

Creedence would become famous, but not for a while. "It took us 10 years from when we started to when we had our first hit," Clifford said.

The band would go on to have a lot of hits, including "Proud Mary," "Born on the Bayou," "Bad Moon Rising," "Lodi," "Green River," "Down on the Corner," "Fortunate Son," "Up Around the Bend" and "Someday Never Comes."

They would also have one of the bitterest breakups in rock history. After the disbanding, John Fogerty stopped associating with his bandmates, including his brother Tom, who died in 1990.

"(John) won't talk to us," explained Clifford. "We have to go through his lawyer to talk to him. Lawyers get pretty expensive at $650 an hour. It's been that way for a decade. It's not something I think about at all. I have a great band. I put duct tape on my rear view mirror and moved on."

Even so, Clifford said, "If he called me, I would lift up the phone."

Fortunately, things are a lot more relaxed with Creedence Clearwater Revisited.

"When we started this in '95, Stu and I had a five-year plan," said Clifford, who said that since then, he and Cook renew their decision to continue playing at the end of each year. "This is our 20th anniversary, and I don't plan to quit anytime soon."

Tickets are $30 and $40, and are available at www.eaglemtncasino.com or at the casino gift shop. For more information, call (800) 903-3353.

Three Rivers

Continued from p. 17

of the many art forms she uses, from printmaking to watercolor, and clay sculpture to pastel and ink. George Smith has expanded his extensive functional stoneware collection to include clay landscapes that depict scenes inspired by the local landscape. His large clay studio includes many kilns, some for salt glaze firing and pit fire that he made himself.

- Nadi Spencer, known for her murals and paintings of local scenes, now paints poignant acrylic portraits of dogs as special commissions for their owners. These portraits have traveled all over the world, with the initial contacts coming from an international exposure that she has found via Facebook.
- Nikki Crain hand-weaves colorful shawls for her wearable art collection with carefully chosen fine threads and some of her hand-dyed yarns. She has nine looms, where with flying shuttle and happy feet on pedals, she also weaves towels, placemats and functional items for the home.
- Clayton Porter has been gathering fine gems and jewels for several decades. He encircles them with wrapped gold wire, using no solder or glue, making a completely different setting for each ring or pendant.
- Christine Sell-Porter found oil and brush to be her ideal art medium. She loves to paint nature and landscape scenes, especially ones that she has found since moving to Three Rivers a few years ago.
- Shirley Keller traverses a diverse artist's palette, including photography, clay mask-making and painting colorful dot patterns on found metal objects. She calls her studio and home "Spirit Hill."
- Martha Widmann paints what she calls "slow art." Her profound images emerge from an inner process, appearing on small and large canvas, with uniquely designed frames. She uses acrylic paint, which allows her control over the consistency of the paint, sometimes painting with the most translucent, clear layers of color.
- Jerry Jonnum works with clay and earth-sourced materials to make mosaic installations and large-scale individual artworks. For many past studio tours, he assisted his late wife, Nancy Jonnum, a distinctive clay sculptor and potter. Nancy was to have been the featured artist for this studio tour, but following a sudden, unexpected diagnosis of leukemia, she died in late 2012. Her clay studio will open during the studio tour to honor her outstanding life's work and memory. Jerry and her family welcome all to share stories and see the family's personal collection of her whimsical clay sculpture.
- Elsah Cort is a collage artist, blending her lifelong love of photography into new digital collages, which she calls digital paintings. She uses computer, color, texture and layering to make surprising images. The featured art for this studio tour is a digital painting she calls "Sustenance," made from photographs of mannequins in store windows and flowers from her garden.

Work by Nancy Jonnum

Tickets for the studio tour are $20 per adult, $5 per child under age 12. Tickets, good for all three days, can be purchased at Arts Visalia Gallery, the Three Rivers Historical Museum, online at threeriversartstudiotour.com, or by calling 561-4671. Tickets are also available at the door each day.

ART

Through March 22 – Fiber-Fabric Thread
The Kings Art Center's Fiber-Fabric-Thread exhibit, featuring works by members of the Common Threads Quilt Guild, is at 605 N. Douty St., Hanford. The center is open Wednesday through Friday, 11am-4pm and Saturday and Sunday from 12 to 3pm. For information visit kingsartcenter.org.

Through April 26 – Tulare Business Pride Mini Exhibit
The Tulare Historical Society and Museum will host a mini-exhibit in its audio-visual room. Tulare Business Pride showcases a selection of business memorabilia from some of Tulare's finest businesses. The museum, at 444 W. Tulare Avenue, is open from 10am-4pm Thursday through Saturdays. Admission is $5 for adults. Student and senior discounts available. For information, visit tularehistoricalmuseum.org.

Through May 16 – Awakening Exhibit – 5:30-8:30pm
"Awakening Exhibit" at Provost & Pritchard will feature artwork by Betty Berk, Toni Best, Jeri Burzin, Laurie Gorman, Linda Hengst, Deb Nolan, Deanna Saldana, Lynn Ramires and Sherley Tucker. A reception will be held at the Downtown Wine Walk in Visalia April 3.

March 20 – Ladies Night at Clay Café – 6-10pm
Clay Café provides a complimentary dinner and drinks while you paint your purchased ceramic piece. Studio Fee is $10. Clay Café is located at 25 E. Main St., # B, Visalia. Reservations are required and can be made by calling 733-2022. For information, visit claycafevisalia.com.

March 21-23 – Three Rivers Studio Tour Eleven
The Three Rivers Artists' Biennial Studio Tour is a self-guided tour that happens when the foothills are adorned with wildflowers. Featured artists include Rick Badgley, Anne Birkholz, Jana Botkin, Elsah Cort, Nikki Crain, Jerry Jonnum, Shirley Keller, Clayton Porter, Christine Sell-Porter, Mona Selph, George Smith, Nadi Spencer and Martha Widmann. Tickets are $20. Call 561-4671 to purchase or visit the Three Rivers Historical Museum or Arts Visalia Gallery. For information, visit threeriversartstudiotour.com.

April 4 – Baskets and Gourds: Containers of Our Culture Reception
Arts Visalia will hold an opening reception for The Tulare-Sequoia Gourd Patch Containers of Our Culture exhibit. The Arts Visalia exhibit will show works by leading artists in the fields of basket weaving and gourd art from April 2 through April 26. A second reception will be held April 25 to kick off the weekend of the Containers of Our Culture Conference. For information, visit artsvisalia.org.

THEATER

March 20–Independent Film Movement Series – The Iran Job – 6pm
This month's Independent Film Movement selection is "The Iran Job," about an American basketball player who learns about more than basketball. This event, held in the Visalia Library Blue Room, is free. For more information, call the Tulare County Library at 713-2703.

March 20 – 20 Feet From Stardom – 7:30pm
The March screening of the Fox Independent Film Series is "20 Feet from Stardom" at Visalia Fox Theatre. The movie tells the story of backup singers for the biggest bands in popular music. The 2013 documentary won the Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature. Tickets are $7 general and $5 for students, seniors and military at the door. For information, visit foxvisalia.org.

March 21-23, 28-30 – Hartburn Hotel 2 & 7:30pm
The Kings Players present an ol' fashioned melodrama with a surprise ending that will leave you in stitches at The Temple Theatre, 514 E. Visalia Street in Hanford. The Friday and Saturday performances are held at 7:30pm, and Sundays have a matinee showing at 2pm. For reservations, call 584-7241.

March 22 – Ralphie May – 8-11pm
Perico Productions presents Comedian Ralphie May at the Visalia Fox Theatre. Ralphie's popularity explored from the success on NBC's show, "Last Comic Standing." He has since performed on "The Late Late Show," "Jimmy Kimmel Live" and "The Tonight Show." Tickets are $16-$26. Tickets and information available at foxvisalia.org.

April

April 17 – Laughter's Good - Rodney Carrington – 7:30pm
Tachi Palace will present Comedian Rodney Carrington. Bingo Hall Doors open at 6pm. Mature audience only. For information, visit tachipalace.com.

May

May 1-4, 9-11 and 16-18 – Nobody's Perfect
Encore Theatre Company presents "Nobody's Perfect" at the Encore Theatre, 324 South N Street, Tulare. Advance tickets available. For more information, visit tulareencoretheatre.org or call 686-1300.

See more events online
ourvalleyvoice.com

3rd Annual Downtown Visalia Wine & Cheese Walk Set for April 3

Downtown Visalians and the San Joaquin Valley Wine Growers Association invite everyone to their 3rd Wine & Cheese Walk from 5:30-8:30pm on Thursday, April 3, to celebrate the wines and cheeses that California is famous for, while visiting locally owned and operated businesses.

With a ticket, participants will taste and judge wines at 30 different locations throughout downtown Visalia. A list of participating merchants and wineries can be found at www.downtownvisalia.com. You must be at least 21 to get a wristband to participate in the wine tastings. Ticket-buyers without a wristband will be admitted to taste the cheeses and non-alcoholic beverages being provided.

Wristbands, wine glasses and tickets will be available at the Downtown Visalians Office, 119 S. Church St., and at the Visalia Fox Theatre box office, 308 W. Main St. Tasters will vote for their favorite wines at the San Joaquin Valley Wine Growers Association location at 208 W. Main St. (Montgomery Square). The fan favorites of the evening will be announced after the event.

Tickets are $35 and may be reserved by credit card or PayPal by calling 732-7737. For more information, visit www.DowntownVisalia.com or call Colleen Pack-Ferreira, promotions coordinator, at 732-7737.

"Mariposa Lily, Yosemite" by Jeri Burzin

Downtown Visalia Art Exhibit Provides 'Awakening'

Provost & Pritchard Consulting Group offers a wide range of engineering and consulting services for a diverse group of clients. They are also very active hosting artists and art exhibits at their offices at 130 N. Garden St. in Visalia. Their current exhibit, "Awakening," features Main Gallery artists and runs through May 17. The artist reception will take place during the Downtown Wine & Cheese Walk on Thursday, April 3, from 5:30-8:30pm.

"There is 'awakening' of new life and color all around us and Main Gallery artists share our interpretation of 'awakening' through our images on display," explains Jeri Burzin.

Every time a new piece comes to life, Toni Best feels "it awakens my imagination and my creativity." Her "Green Crocus" is "a spring flower that epitomizes the awakening of nature with the coming of spring."

Betty Berk experiences awakening, "like an onion peeling back the layers. In my artwork, I discover new understandings that feel like I've woken up to a new paradigm."

Linda Hengst thinks of spring with the word awakening. "That is when bulbs suddenly appear and bloom. It is also when mist comes off the ponds and clouds creep around the mountain, all elements in my paintings."

Laurie Gorman's oranges, bird of paradise, lilac and papayas, "are all bright colorful images of spring, reflection of renewal, a time of new growth and regeneration, when trees and plants bring forth fruit and flowers, vibrant colors, lovely to look at, and fruit delicious to eat."

"My work focuses on the natural beauty of new blooms, new life and new directions," says Deb Nolan. "I am renewed with each view."

"A flower garden is always awakening," adds Lynn Ramires.

"My life has been a series of new awakenings," says Sherley Tucker. "I am convinced I have had many reincarnations during this one lifetime. An accountant by trade, my secret goal was to become an artist." Her artworks in the exhibition are early endeavors in collage and watercolor.

"The concept of awakening is vast and diverse, and brings about change or action, inspires movement into a new way of thinking, being or behaving," muses Deanna Saldana, whose newest works revolve around awakening, renewing or becoming through a very natural blending of colors. "My work reflects the 'awakening' I experience each spring, when new life and color abound, which is reflected in my images of flowers taken in the peak of spring."

Main Gallery is a collaborative group of artists, committed to enhancing the community with their art-making and features a wide variety of art media including acrylic, oil, watercolor, photography, collage, ceramics, stained glass, mixed media, gourds and basket-weaving. For more information, visit www.maingalleryvisalia.com.

Lindsay High School Guitar Ensemble's Honor Group to Give Final Spring Show

With a majority of its guitarists about to graduate from Lindsay High School, the Guitar Ensemble's Honor Group will give its final spring performance at the Museum/Gallery, 165 N. Gale Hill Ave., Lindsay, on Saturday, March 22, at 7pm.

Lindsay High School Guitar Ensemble's Honor Group prepares for performance.

This ensemble is a group one might expect to hear on a college campus, or possibly in a concert hall, but not usually on a high school campus. It is made up of eight dedicated and talented classical guitarists who give up their afternoons and occasional weekends to make beautiful music together. Drawn from the advanced class of Lindsay's very large guitar program, they have performed throughout the Central Valley and have garnered many music awards, including Command Performances at the State Music Festival. The group recently played on KVPR-FM for the 12th year as part of the station's "Young Artists Spotlight" program.

Members play as an ensemble, in duets, trios and as soloists. One of the newest members also plays cello, which adds beautiful texture to the guitar music. This member is Kathryne Wills, who also plays with the Tulare Symphony, and will be performing a solo, as will guitarists Joseph Ochoa and Salvador Madrigal, both graduating seniors.

The Lindsay Guitar Ensemble draws its members from Director Nancy Wills' classes at Lindsay High School, where she has been the founder and director of the program since 1999.

Enhancing the music of the guitars and cello will be the acoustics of Lindsay's Museum/Gallery, a Spanish-style building constructed in the 1930s, which closely matches the architecture of the Lindsay City Hall. In addition to the performance, there will be an exhibit of photographs by Blue Ridge Photography, taken during a trip down the Danube River, with stops in Vienna and Budapest and side trips to Prague and southern Germany.

The concert begins with hors d'oeuvres and beverages during intermission. Tickets are $15, with proceeds going primarily to the Lindsay Guitar Ensemble.

The Southern Pacific caboose before… and after.

Tulare County Historical Society to Unveil Restored Caboose

The Tulare County Historical Society is inviting everyone to attend the unveiling of the newly restored Southern Pacific Railroad caboose at Tulare County Museum in Mooney Grove Park, 2-4pm on Sunday, March 30.

The guest speaker will be John Bergman, train expert and the author of The Southern San Joaquin Valley: A Railroad History. Refreshments will be served.

The event is free to attend. For more information, call Jill Brown at 626-4988.

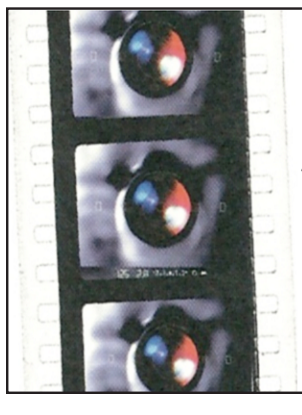
Join us for the Dining Car
3-Course Lunch
Chef's Choice - $16

The Southern Pacific DEPOT RESTAURANT

207 East Oak Avenue, Visalia

www.depotvisalia.com

FOR RESERVATIONS, CALL 732-8611.



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Sci-Fi

Continued from p. 17

Scheduled guests at the Tulare Sci-Fi Con include:

- Phillip Cable, the playwright and founder of "Sunshine Theatre." He is a columnist, the author of a top selling filmmaking book, The Independent Filmmaker's Guide to Writing a Business Plan for Investors. He wrote science fiction kid shows for CMC Productions and has given lectures to groups, including the Screen Actors Guild, Women in Film, stunt classes and conventions, including Comic-Con International. He is currently the president of AAA American Entertainment. He was the director, producer and screenwriter of "Vampiress: Lady of the Night," "Lisa Todd's Hollywood," "Battle Beast," "Comic Book Kid" and "Fear Factory."
- Belinda Cable is a movie producer, a movie distributor, an actress, a voice-over artist and a professional clown. She produced "Vampiress: Lady of the Night," "The Race Against Hunger" and "The Action Agency," and acted in "Z-Survive" and "Demon Star."
- Ethan Dettenmaier is host of Combat Radio, which spotlights high profile guests from the worlds of film, music and ultimate fighting. He has written for Steven Seagal, Dark Horse Comics and the producers of "The Blade" franchise. In 2008, he founded Arsenal Productions and Management.
- Erin Fitzgerald is a voice-over artist best known for 10 years of work on "Ed, Edd and Eddy," Cartoon Network's longest-running original animated series, as Nazz and May Kanker. She also voiced Abbey Bominable, Spectra Vondergeist, Rochelle Goyle, Scarah Scream, Wydowna Spider, Claire and C.A. Cupid on "Monster High."
- George McArthur, a.k.a. "George the Giant," stands an impressive 7' 3". He has appeared in Bizarre, The Enquirer, The Globe, Us and Vogue magazines, and in movies such as "Firecracker," "Big Fish" and "Tough Luck." His television appearances include "Highway to Heaven," "Touched by an Angel," "The Guardian," "According to Jim" and "America's Got Talent." (Sharon Osborne told him, "You are the most disgusting person I have ever seen.")
- C. Andrew Nelson is an actor, visual effects artist, animator and lecturer. He spent six years at LucasArts Entertainment Company where he was a VFX supervisor and senior artist. He played the role of Darth Vader in Lucasfilm games since 1994, with appearances as Vader in "Star Wars: Dark Forces," "Star Wars: Rebel Assault II: The Hidden Empire" and the "Special Edition of Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back."
- Kaci Hansen, a.k.a. "The Homicidal Homemaker," is the Central Valley's own horror hostess, running a blog and horror-themed food service.

Kaci Hansen, a.k.a. "The Homicidal Homemaker"

Her cookbook and cooking show are due later this year. Featured in Rue Morgue Magazine, Horror Hosts & Creature Features and The Huffington Post, she describes her homemaking ventures as "where home economics meets horror." Based in Visalia, she has several reasons to look forward to the convention.

"I'll be hosting the costume contest at the event, and am very excited to see some creative costumes," said Hansen. "I will also be available at my table to talk to fans about my website, 'The Homicidal Homemaker,' my upcoming cookbook and cooking show, as well as Central Valley Horror Club's upcoming events. I also will have prints from my comic available for purchase. Some members of Central Valley Horror Club will also be doing makeup tutorials.

"Usually, local fans of the sci-fi genre have to travel outside of the Central Valley just to participate in something like this," she added. "Because of the long drive, along with travel expenses or schedules, it makes it really difficult for many to attend, and most of the time, they have to miss out altogether.

"I think it's very good for the youth in our community, because it gives them something fun, different and affordable to be involved with," Hansen said. "Hopefully, it will give them the opportunity to get to meet the people involved with the comics and films that they've grown to love, and inspire them to create art, comics or costumes of their own."

The event seems to have a lot to offer, even though it got off to a late start.

"It should take nine months to a year," said Mazer, who noted that planning started in October. "It was originally supposed to be an indoor carnival, but that didn't work out. The vendors' costs were too big." The event evolved into a science fiction convention because, "we wanted to do something that would self-decorate."

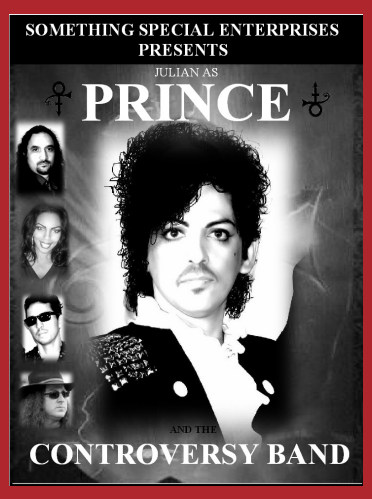
Tickets are $6, with children 6 and younger, as well as military with ID, admitted free. Those in costume and seniors (55+) are admitted for $3. For more information, visit www.tularescifi.com.org.

"If this does decently, my goal is to do it every year," said Mazer, adding that people at the International AgriCenter are "real excited" about having the event there.

Early indications are promising. There were more than 20 booths planned as of March 10, including those hosted by special guests and artists.

"We've been getting a lot of likes on Facebook," added Mazer.

Coming to the Hanford Fox



The Prince Controversy Band
Saturday, April 26, 2014
8:00 PM • $20

Doc's Holiday
Saturday, May 17, 2014
8:00 PM • $20

JUST ADDED!!!
The Glenn Miller Orchestra
Friday, August 22, 2014

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FOX THEATRE

Arts Consortium Poster Contest Announced

The Arts Consortium has announced a contest to design the poster for this year's "Taste the Arts" event, which will take place in downtown Visalia on October 11.

All Central California artists are invited to submit a poster that embodies the theme of Taste the Arts. The poster design may complement artwork that has already been created for previous Taste the Arts.

The selected design may be reproduced on posters, t-shirts and other promotional items that will support the festival. As such, judging criteria will include viability of sales potential. Submissions should be thematically related to the arts festival, which celebrates art, culture and community.

The poster size must be 11" x 17" and submissions must be submitted in digital media form and be vector graphics-compatible.

Entries should be delivered electronically to the Arts Consortium via email or by filling out the form at www.artsvisalia.org. All entries must be received by April 21.

For complete rules and other information, visit www.artsvisalia.org.